

THE HELPING-HAND SERIES.

BILLY GRIMES'

FAVORITE;

OR,

JOHNNY GREENLEAF'S TALENT.

BY MAY MANNERING.

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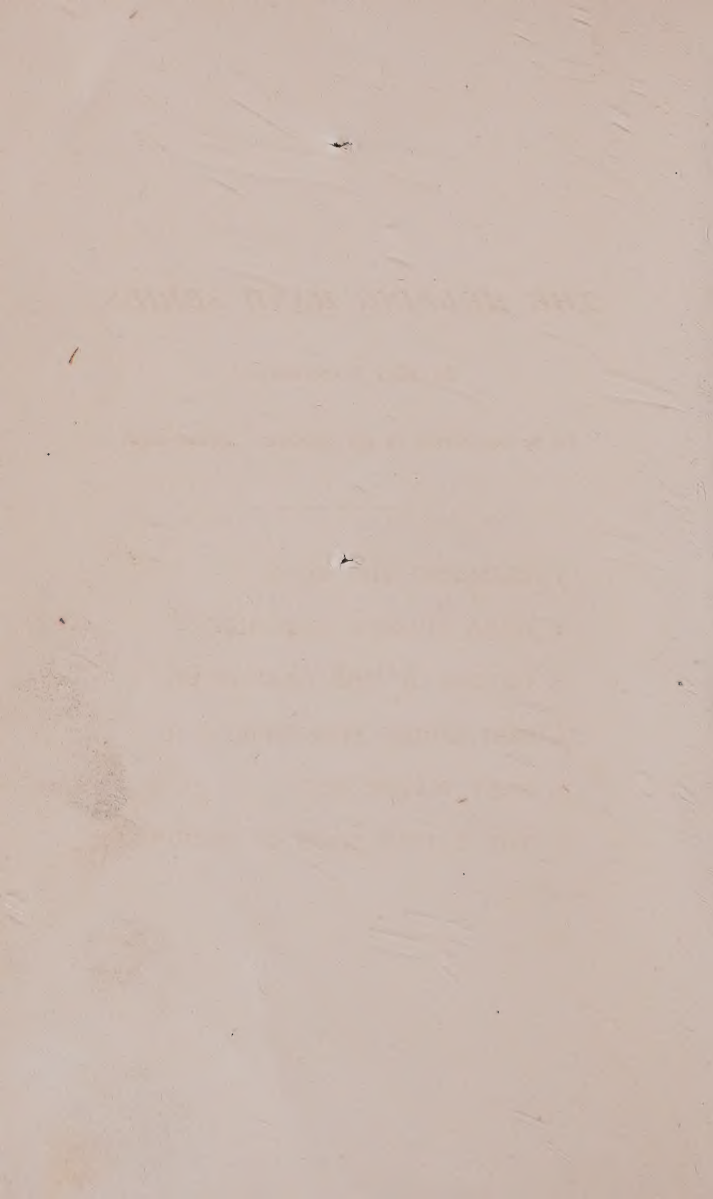
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TO MY DEAR FRIEND

EMMA CUSHING,

This Book

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.



THE HELPING HAND SERIES.

By MAY MANNERING.

To be completed in six volumes. Illustrated.

1. CLIMBING THE ROPE.
2. BILLY GRIMES' FAVORITE.
3. CRUISE OF THE DASHAWAY.
4. THE LITTLE SPANIARD.
5. SALT WATER DICK.
6. THE LITTLE MAID OF OXBOW.

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BILLY GRIMES' FAVORITE.

CHAPTER I.

JOHNNY GREENLEAF'S SUNDAY.

LATE one pleasant Sunday afternoon in summer, Johnny Greenleaf was on his way home, through the woods, to his father's farm near Milford's Crossing.

The heat of the day had passed away, and the birds were fluttering in the trees, clearing their little throats for their evening hymn. Squirrels were sitting quiet upon mossy rocks, under chestnut trees, feeling, perhaps, that on Sunday evening even *they* might rest from their work and play, and find time to enjoy that pleasant season.

The graceful young ferns were bowing

and whispering to the little blue-eyed violets, which hardly dared even to look up to their tall admirers, though now and then, when some of the more daring ferns reached down and kissed these modest little flowers, the color of their petals deepened, and they trembled so violently that the air was filled with their pure fragrance.

Wild lilies of the valley, as they stood in their little cliques, exchanged pleasant good-night words, the breath of which went floating all through the woods. The anemones, though their reign was almost over, seemed as happy as any of the flowers, and folded their white robes about them as if they were sure of many long nights to sleep in. The day-stars, little innocents, kept their bright eyes wide open, determined not to give up their watch until their brothers, the night-stars, appeared in the sky. Here and there a soft bed of velvety moss invited to repose, and seemed to offer a downy, pleasant resting-place for the night, to those little wandering insects which journey about all day,

and go to sleep at night wherever they can find a good place.

In some parts of the forest, where the old year's leaves were thick on the earth, with brown pine droppings sprinkled over them, the ground sloped down into hollows, and small pools made their appearance, furnishing pleasant homes for old father and mother frogs, with all their little ones. This evening the frogs sat around the edge of the ponds, seeming quite refreshed by their Sunday's bath, for they had kept under water nearly all day.

They were all tuning up their voices to the proper pitch of bass-viol and violins, for their Sunday evening entertainment.

Johnny walked along, looking around, and seeing all about him the pretty sights we have been describing. The farm-house was still several miles away, and as the sun sank lower, Johnny hurried his pace, and tramped along with quite manly strides for such a little fellow. When he was a few years younger, he used to ride to church

with his father and mother, in the old one-horse chaise. His seat was always a little three-legged cricket, in front of his parents, just behind the dasher.

His father, on these occasions, wore his Sunday's suit of stout blue cloth, made with very long skirts, and buttoned up with bright buttons. Johnny used to like to peep into these buttons when he wanted something to amuse him in church. He always felt like laughing when he saw his face reflected in them, for there he looked like a jolly little pumpkin. Sometimes he *did* laugh aloud, and then his mother seized him by the arms and sat him down hard on the little seat in the corner of the pew. Then, when he had nothing else to do, he would count the figures in his mother's short, scant, green and white barege dress, which she had worn to church every summer in his remembrance. But all this happened years ago,—so Johnny thought now, though it really was not a long time back. Johnny felt he was too big to ride to church in the

old chaise, seated on the three-legged cricket now ; and so he must either walk all the way, or else stay at home. Although he was a sturdy farmer's boy, yet his mother often remonstrated against his tramping so many miles on the hot summer days ; but the father said it was good for the boy, and if he was too proud to ride in the chaise with them, he had got to "foot it," and surely no harm would come of it.

It was the fashion in the country for people who lived several miles from church to go early in the morning, and carry their dinners. Now, Johnny's grandmother always put a generous supply of "luncheon" into the two-covered basket under the seat in the chaise, and after the morning service, when the people had gone out under the trees near the church, or sat down in the vestibule, the baskets were all opened, and the people ate with excellent appetites the apple-pie and cheese, bread and butter, cold chicken, or whatever they had brought with them. After that, and before the after-

noon sermon, came Sunday school. Now, Johnny thought more of what he heard at Sunday school than he did of all the long sermons which good Parson Putman ever preached. He didn't understand the sermons, but he always heard something from his teacher at Sunday school which he could think about through the week.

This Sunday evening, as Johnny went through the woods, he thought over something that had been said. His teacher had told the boys a story about a rich gentleman, who was going away on a long journey. Before he started he had a little talk with his servants, and told them that he should leave all his property in their care. It was the custom in those days to do so in that Eastern country where these people lived; and it is the custom there now, as well as in Russia.

To the servant who was the smartest fellow the gentleman gave a large sum of money, called in that country "ten talents," which with us would be many thousand

dollars. To the others he gave what he thought they were fitted to receive, and then he went away. The servants worked hard to make their property increase in value, and by the time the gentleman returned they were able to tell him that each of them had doubled the amount left in his care. All of them could say this,—all but one fellow, who had the smallest part of the property to take care of. He felt very much provoked that so little had been left with him. Then he was timid, and fearful that he should lose even the little that he had. And besides all this, he was a very lazy fellow; so he thought the best thing he could do was to go and bury in the ground the sum that his master had left with him, and let it stay there, without improvement, until the owner came home.

The teacher told the boys in her class that they could take the story, and apply it to themselves: calling the talents of money mentioned there, their own faculties, abilities, or natural endowments; and that they must try to follow the example of those

servants who had improved their talents until they were worth twice as much as they were when first left in their charge.

Some of the boys, on their way home, had been talking about the story as they came along with Johnny, for a mile or so, until their paths separated. When Johnny was left alone, he began to fear that he was like the servant who had but one talent given him.

"Why," thought he, "at school I am the poorest scholar in the class. I am always at the foot, and I cannot understand fractions at all, or know which is the numerator or which the denominator. And in grammar, I don't know what subjunctive mood, masculine gender, objective case, active transitive verbs, mean. Then in history, I can't tell whether it was Pocahontas, Josephine, Arabella Stuart, or Queen Isabella who married Napoleon Bonaparte. And in geography, I never can tell which side I'm on, whether it's the Atlantic or Pacific. They say the world goes around terribly fast, but I

never could believe it, for I know if it did I should have fallen off long ago. Well, I suppose I haven't got any talents; and if I haven't, then I was made so, and that's the end of it."

Johnny kept up a good thinking as he trudged home; and he could not forget how severely the teacher had spoken about that lazy servant, who, instead of making the most of the little he had, went and hid it away, just as Johnny was thinking of doing now.

"If anything is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well," Johnny remembered to have heard his teacher say. "Yes, I know," he thought, "books are good things, and what's in them is worth learning, I suppose; but somehow I never could get interested in any of them. If they would only let me stay in the woods all day, I could learn more than I do sitting on those hard seats in the hot, dusty school-room. Peter Lanford says his mother says that I'm a 'natural,' — a 'natural born fool,' I suppose that means.

Perhaps I cannot learn anything, and haven't got even one talent: I don't know; but if I *can* do anything with what little *must* be in me, why, I guess I had better not think of hiding it, as that fellow did in the story, but I'll take the teacher's advice, and try to make the most of it. I don't know as I *am* good for anything, but I'll try hard to find out, and if I am, why, then I'll do as I said."

So, having settled the question, the boy hurried along faster, thinking that if he got home before dark he should do the best thing possible for that present time. Now, Johnny could whistle if he *was* stupid, and when he went through these long woods he found his whistle a pleasant companion. Being Sunday evening, Johnny felt that he must confine his whistling to "Sunday tunes;" so he chose those which he could get off in time nearly equal to his rapid walking, — such tunes as Lenox, Portugal, Zion, and Christmas.

The shadows rapidly deepened in the

woods, and the night air was heavy with the odors of pines, sweet ferns, and the breath of sleeping flowers. The birds had finished their evening hymns, and gone to sleep in their nests, and the squirrels had retired for the night, before Johnny passed out of the thick wood, and struck into the road which led to his father's house. He stood still on the edge of the forest for a moment, stopped his whistling, and listened to the light step of a woodchuck, who was out on some favorite haunt. He heard a muskrat splash into a pond near by, and he noticed that the frogs' voices grew harsher and baser as the night came on. An owl from a tree near by sent out a mournful cry; and just at that moment a distressing little chirp came up from the ground, and Johnny stooped down quickly, and felt around in the grass for the little bird whose note he knew so well. He felt it fluttering almost at his feet, and taking it up gently, he carried it out of the woods, where the twilight had not yet faded quite away, and there he saw that one wing

was broken, and the poor young robin, with hardly feathers enough to cover him, was suffering great pain, and constantly giving a sharp little cry, which told of its distress.

"He has fallen out of his nest," thought Johnny, "or else some of those cow-black-birds have been laying their eggs there, and and the young ones are hatched, and the greedy things have crowded this little fellow out. I don't see why the robins don't know the cow-birds' eggs from their own, and throw them out before they hatch. Poor little robin! If I can get him home alive, I believe I can fix his wing so that he will be around and lively in a few days."

Holding the bird tenderly, talking to it in soothing tones, and thinking how he could bind up its wounds, occupied the whole attention of the little boy until he reached his father's house, which was but a short distance up the road that led from the woods.

The robin still fluttered and cried as Johnny passed through the farm-yard and

went around to the back door, where his mother stood looking out for him.

"I'm glad you have come, Johnny dear," said the mother, as she took off his straw hat and wiped the perspiration from his forehead. "Sit right down here, where it is easy," she said; "here, in this rush-bottomed chair, for I know you are tired, and I will bring you a bowl of bread and milk."

CHAPTER II.

BILLY GRIMES' SERMON.

BREAD and milk always tastes nice to a tired little country boy ; but Johnny wouldn't touch a bit of it until he had done something for the wounded bird.

"The bird is so young, mother," he said, "and his bones are so tender, that I guess his wing can be set, so that it will soon grow into its right place again. I've seen Billy Grimes set birds' wings, and I shouldn't wonder if I could set it myself."

"No, no, Johnny, you little chicken-hearted, foolish boy!" said his mother ; "you cannot do it well at all. Do let that bird alone, and come and eat your supper."

Johnny felt pained. It was the old story : his mother had called him foolish, and chicken-hearted, and said it wasn't sensible

to try to set the bird's wing, and that it was a great deal more sensible to eat his supper and let the bird suffer.

"Mother knows better than I do," thought Johnny; "but if *I* had got hurt, I guess she would want people to help me, just as much as the mother-bird would like to have me take care of this little one. I don't see why birds aren't just as good as people. They are kinder to me, anyhow, and never call me foolish. But I must help a man who was hurt, just the same as I would a bird, if I could. I wish birds, and chipmunks, and foxes, and all the things that live in the woods were relations to us. I don't believe but that they are, for I love them, and they love me just as much as uncle Zekiel's folks up to Canterbury love our folks. Trees, and grass, and water-lilies are alive, too, I guess, for I believe they know me whenever I go near them. But I'm not helping the robin. I'll go right off to Billy Grimes' now, and get him to help me. I'd rather help the bird than have all the suppers in the world.

"I'm going up to Billy Grimes', mother," called Johnny to his mother, who had gone out into the dairy. "I don't want anything to eat now. I won't be gone long."

He pulled down his every-day hat from a nail near the door, and started off across the fields.

"There, father!" said Mrs. Greenleaf to her husband, when she came up from the dairy, "I don't know what I shall do with that boy. He don't take after me. He don't seem to have any spunk, or be fit for much of anything, unless it is going about the woods, and hunting up sick animals and things, and nussin' 'em up, and bringing of 'em home to clutter up my house. I declare, I can't turn up an old sugar-bowl, or a teapot, or a tumbler, but some kind of an ugly-looking thing, that Johnny has put there, will jump right out in my face! I'm most sick of his nonsense. I should think you would make him do different. Now, when you and I was boys of his age, we used to put on our overalls, and do most a man's work."

"You're a leetle excited, mother," said Mr. Greenleaf, in his moderate way, rubbing his hands, and looking amused. "I guess you never was a boy, and didn't wear overalls nuther. Like as not, though, you could do pretty nigh as much work as a man, for if I *do* say it, there ain't many women that can turn off as much as you can now, and we ain't neither of us as young as we was once."

"La, father, you needn't go to flattering me. But Johnny don't take after me, that's clear. He's more of a Greenleaf than he is Scratchgravel, though he don't favor either side much. But if you'd do your duty, father, and look after him sharp, maybe we could make some kind of a tolerable farmer out of him after all. But if he goes on in this way, he'll never earn his bread; and he won't git none of our money that we've been a-savin' up so long, unless he's smarter than he is now; for I'll never let the work of *my* hands go to feed the idle and lazy, and them that won't help them-

selves, even if they are my own flesh and blood."

"Come, come, mother! your tongue is running away with you; you don't mean all you're a-saying. Johnny is a good boy, if he ain't as bright as some; but that's no fault of his, for he's just as the Lord made him, I suppose."

"No, he ain't, nuther, father. The Lord don't make folks shiftless and lazy; it is something they go and bring on themselves. My New England Primer says, 'Satan finds some mischief still, for idle hands to do;' and the words are as true as the Scriptur'. You put Johnny to work, and see if the devil don't let him alone."

"Why, mother, how you talk! The devil ain't got nothing to do with our boy. Sometimes I think he is nearer the angels than either you or I. We don't understand him altogether, I reckon; but I guess the Lord does, and will do about as fair for him as we can."

"Well, I like to see good management,

father, and if one can't do it, why, let another take hold."

"O, Polly, Polly! can't you trust the Lord's management? I know you're smart, but you ain't a match for him. Now, don't you worry any more; let things drift along; they'll all come out right, I reckon."

"There, that's clear Greenleaf! There ain't a speck of Scratchgravel in that!"

But the farmer didn't hear, for he had taken up a yellow, well-worn hymn-book, which used to belong to his old mother, and gone out with it to sit on the big rock under the lilac bushes.

Going across the fields, along by the stone walls, so that he should not trample down the grass, which was promising a fine crop of hay, Johnny soon came in sight of Grimes' hut. It was small, one-story, and black, with a great, tumble-down chimney in the middle of the roof; shingles and clapboards coming off all about; the roof broken in at one corner, and many of the small lights in the windows broken through, leav-

ing only the worm-eaten, wooden frames, looking like the empty eye-sockets of skeletons.

There was a small garden-patch near the house, where the young, slender, green shoots of the Indian corn, the dark-green potato leaves, broad, crimson-veined beet leaves, and climbing, speckled beans, were up above ground, and giving evidence of good care. There were several clever little hen-coops about the yard, made of green willow twigs, bent and twisted into the shape of minute Indian wigwams, each one just big enough for a good plump mother-hen, with a young brood of downy buff and white chickens.

In the doorway, upon the rotten, crumbling sill, sat Billy Grimes, an old white-headed colored man, whose form was very much bent with years, and whose face was a network of wrinkles and furrows. Round silver-bowed spectacles sat on his nose, and were tied firmly around his head by a shoestring, which buried itself in the

wool behind. Upon the knees of his much-worn old plaid pants rested a large dilapidated Bible, the leaves of which were yellow with time, and soiled with frequent handling. The forefinger of the old man's right hand pointed slowly along from word to word, and his lips kept time with his finger. He was so absorbed in the study of the good book that he did not see Johnny until he sat down on the smooth, flat stone before the door.

"Sure 'nuf, that's you, Johnny; but I didn't see you coming. I dun furgit ebery ting in dis yer world when I git hold of dis yer blessed book that my mammy left me nigh onto I can't reckon how many years ago. 'Pears like it's next thing to bein' in heaven to be a-reading dese yer promises and 'scriptions of good folks who used to live here; and all about de bressed Son of God, who came down from heaven, and lived here in dis yer bery world, until he growed to man's stature, so dat he might set us all a 'xample how to be good to one 'nother,

and lift off folks' burdens, and let de oppressed go free, and larn to be pious, and git all washed pure and fit to live in his Fader's house, where dey are so many mansions dat dere will be enuf for even poor ole Billy Grimes if he's 'pared fur to take one. But what yer got thar, Johnny, a-crying and a-chirping like as if something had been hurt?"

"It's a young robin, Uncle Billy, that I found down in Milford's woods, coming home from the village. He's got his wing broken, and I've come to git you to mend it."

"'Are not two sparrows sold fur two farthings, and dey ain't one of 'em furgot afore God.' 'He hars de young ravens when dey cry, and de hairs of der heads is all numbered.' Let me see de little feller, Johnny; maybe I ken fix him up right smart 'fore long."

The old man took the bird carefully, and examined its wound. "Sure 'nuf," said he, "its off wing is broken. It must have fell

out of its nest, or been abused somehow or other. I've got a yarb dat I find in de woods, and my ole mammy larned me how to use it for wounds and sich like, and it heals powerful. I'll git a piece of one of my ole bandannas, and try to set the wing right, den anint it with a little of that steeped yarb, and bind it up, and feed the bird on something I know how to make, and den I reckon der'll be a right good chance of his gittin' around 'fore long."

Johnny watched the old man as he shuffled about his black, smoke-stained room, the only habitable one in the house, getting ready his herbs and bandanna for the suffering little bird. With careful tenderness and skilful hand, Billy Grimes attended to the broken wing; and although the poor bird fluttered and cried with pain, the wing was soon set, secured in its right place again, bathed with the healing ointment, and the little sufferer put away to rest in an old cocoanut-shell lined with soft moss.

"O, Uncle Billy," said Johnny, "I wish I

knew how to help things when they get hurt as well as you do. I'd give anything if I knew as much as you do ; but everybody says I ain't good for much, and can't learn like other folks ; so I suppose I haven't got any talents at all, and can't do anything."

"Hi, you young 'un, how you talk ! You's mistrusting Providence when you say that. The good Lord gives us all a chance, and some of us takes de chance and makes de most out of it ; and den der be others dat ain't kind of satisfied like, and dey go growling along all der lives, and don't see no good in anything, and tinks dey ain't much account ; and dey *is* so mighty shiftless dat de Lord lets 'em tink so too, I reckon. You ain't one of dem, Johnny. If you was, you wouldn't have picked up dat ar little bird and brought him here for me to nuss. Why, when we love de tings dat de Lord has made, — the moon, and the stars, the rocks, flowers, trees, and birds, why, in course, we love him. Den, if we love him, we want to be a-doin' something for him in de

world, and 'cause he give us de talents, if tain't but jest one of dem, why, we want to do the most with it that we ken; so we mustn't go and bury it in a napkin, as de Scripturs say de unwise sarvant did, but we must use it and 'prove it, and git jest as much as we can out of it, to give back to de Lord when he shall 'quire it at our hands. Den, if we have been among de faithful, we shall har de Lord say, 'Yer's been faithful with a little, and now yer shall have much.' Dems de sentiments of de good book, and deys jest my sentiments, too; and I'se been a-trying to live up to them dese I dun know how many years, and I'se prayed fur de Lord to help me do it, and to love his cre-turs, and try to help 'em all I ken. P'raps dat's de talent that I've got, — helping things. I dun know. Bress de Lord, he knows what we are made for! If 'twan't for him, whar' should we be?"

Johnny thought of the old man's words, and remembered them, and before he went to sleep that night, on his little cot-bed in the

back chamber, there went out from his heart a telegraphic message, which flashed along the wires reaching from earth to heaven, and was instantly received into the Great Heart above. It was but a wish, a half-formed prayer, but it was not lost.

True it is that

“ He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man, and bird, and beast;
He prayeth best who loveth best
All things, both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.”

CHAPTER III.

LADY RUDDERING. — THE HEART'S-EASE.

AT Billy Grimes',

“An elm grew close
By the cottage eaves,”

and it was a famous building-place for all kinds of birds. They seemed to feel the sympathy which the old man had for them, and year after year fresh nests were built, and sometimes even the old ones inhabited over again. But most of the birds preferred new nests, though some of the lazy ones, or it may be they were the smartest ones, the sages who would save their time for something better, would now and then see an old nest, which, with a little labor of patching up, and a nice new lining, would make a comfortable house, and so would set them-

selves about repairing it for the families they hoped to rear. A few hours' labor would fit these nests for residences, while several days must be taken to build entirely new nests. The robin, ground-bird, and the wren often find themselves able to build wholly new nests in two days, if they are wise in the selection of materials, and get those things which are pliable and strong. But the little house martin, which built every year under the eaves of the hut, had a much more difficult task than the other birds, for her house must be built of mud, or it wouldn't at all suit her taste or needs. Every particle, too, of the mud must be carried in a tiny bill, and hundreds of times the bird must go back and forth from mud hill to eaves, and then the nest must be well dried before it could hold together firmly enough for the weight of even one bird, so the whole process of building often requires five days, and it is indeed a great wonder the little architect can do it so soon!

Morning and evening these birds in the

great elm, and those under the house eaves, would come out for friendly gossiping and pleasant musical reunions. The robin red-breast, sparrow, bluebird, golden robin, brown thrush, red-headed wood-pecker, yellow-bird, and all the other nest owners, were on most excellent terms with each other, and spent many more hours in social pleasantries than they did in wrangling and mischief-making.

The wounded young robin, which Billy Grimes had so kindly cared for, after a few days of weakness and pain, began to improve, and look curiously around his new abode. The little thing soon grew very hungry, but could not readily accommodate itself to Uncle Billy's mode of feeding. The food was good enough, — bugs, worms, and crumbs, but the young bird thought it was such a rough way of taking it in, out of the great, clumsy, black fingers, that he felt he would almost rather starve than get such a dreadful fright and so much rough handling.

The bird's hammock, the moss-lined cocoanut-shell, was hung up on a lower limb of the elm tree as the little fellow began to get well. The other birds seemed to regard him as an orphan and an invalid, and they fluttered over his head, gossiping and whispering about him, and appearing curious to know his history, how he came there, to whom he belonged, what was the matter with him, how long he would stay, and indeed, all the particulars which his brief life could give them.

"Do just look at them birds, Johnny!" said old Billy, one evening, when Johnny had come over to see his friend and inquire for the robin. "They is the most like human critters of anything I ever did see. They are jest as shy, and suspicious, and jealous of that ar little fellar in the cocoanut, as ever yer seed folks be of a stranger who come to live among 'em. Why can't they open their buzums and take 'em right in? If we was all what we should be, we wouldn't go to treating one 'nother so. We'd jest love one

'nother de fust thing, 'cause de same Lord is Father to us all, and we ought all of us to be brethren and sisters to each other, and never go fur suspecting and holdin' off from one 'nother, and quarrelling and pecking like. It's surprising that chil'en of de mighty loving Lord will act as some for us do! Why, it's a wonder we ain't 'shamed to let de Lord know how we've been and spotted de garments which he gin us so pure and white!"

Johnny liked to hear uncle Billy talk, though sometimes he couldn't understand the theories and philosophies of the old man. But it was pleasant for Johnny to go to Grimes' hut after school hours, and work hours, and sit down on the broad stone before the door, listen to the the happy birds up in the big elm, watch the shadows settle over the distant hills, and hear the quaint, tremulous voice of Uncle Billy, as he talked about the loving Father, and the beautiful things that he had put into this world.

It was a pleasant change for Johnny, from

the other scenes of the day; the country school, with its hard wooden benches, noisy, buzzing children, cross old teacher, in his long-tailed, dingy old calico coat, watching the boys with a frown on his face, and a switch in his hand. Then there were the tiresome examples on the slate, and the fearful puzzles in fractions, such ones as, "The distance from Boston to Providence is 40 miles. A., having set out from Boston, has travelled $\frac{2}{17}$ of the distance; and B., having set out at the same time from Providence, has gone $\frac{2}{11}$ of the distance: how far is A. from B.?"—and, "If a horse eat $19\frac{3}{7}$ bushels of oats in $87\frac{3}{7}$ days, how many will 7 horses eat in 60 days?" Then the disagreeable sensation of the switch, and the tingling smart of the ruler upon his palm, for poor Johnny was so dull a scholar that he often experienced both of these. When he got home there were the pigs to feed, the cows to drive from pasture, wood to pile up, kindlings to get, garden to weed, the horse to be watered, the hens, chickens, ducks, geese,

and turkeys to count and shut up, or see safely roosted for the night, and numerous other matters to attend to; all of which his mother called "chores." There never seemed to be a moment of recreation for Johnny when he was at home, for his mother's sharp tongue, moved by the idea that something must be made of the boy, drove him about every moment that he was in sight. No wonder he felt glad when his work was done, and he could go up to Billy Grimes' and rest. There were no boys living near for him to play with, and there was nothing for him to do but ramble about the woods and fields, or else go up to Uncle Billie's. Going to school, he must cross fields and go through woods, for the school-house was two miles from his father's house; and this, with his work and studies, made him feel at night that there was no place like the old stone step in front of Billy Grimes' house, under the elm tree.

"Parson Putman hitched up his old white dobbin, and drove over to see me this after-

noon, Johnny," said Uncle Billy to the boy one evening. "I'se been a member of his church most ever since ole massa Harris brought me up here from de West Indies, yars and yars ago. The parson allus tuk an interest in me, and used to pint out my sins and short comins to me, so dat I was glad to flee from de wrath to come, and fly to de Lord for refuge while dere yet was mercy. De parson brought over some tracts and papers to-day, and said his missus picked out de bery one dat she thought I would like to read. I'se been looking over some of 'em, but my old eyes ain't much account in reading papers and sich like. I ken git along with the Bible pretty well, for I'se heard a sight of it in my day, and it don't take me long to make out de meaning here and there, when I can't see the words; but other kinds of reading I ain't bery pert at. De parson and I was talking about de talents. I introduced de subject 'specially on your account, Johnny; and he pinte out some 'xtracts in

dese yer papers, what he said mebbe yer'd like fur to read. He said dey was about doing with our might what our hands find to do. He said we ain't all of us made fur great tings, but if we do well de little tings that come in our way, why, dat de sum of 'em all will sometime amount to 'siderable. Here is something dat de parson pinted out. Yer ken read it out loud, Johnny, an I'll try to git de sense of it. No matter if yer can't read bery well, I guess I ken make out de meaning."

Johnny took the paper, wishing very much that he was a better reader, and promising himself that he would try harder than ever at school to learn to read so that Uncle Billy would like to hear him, and there would be no need of skipping the hard words which neither of them could make out.

Uncle Billy weeded his garden, and Johnny sat on his favorite old stone step, and read in a slow, schoolboy style, the following story:—

LADY RUDDERING OF DENMARK.

Many years ago, during the reign of Snies, King of Denmark, there was a great famine throughout the kingdom. The harvest failed, the people suffered for food, and the king was unable to provide any for them. At last they assembled together in a great meeting, to consider what could be done to relieve their misery. Several plans were proposed, but as none of them gave immediate relief, they were laid aside as useless. The great men then declared that the only thing to be done was to kill all the old and infirm people, and give what little food they were saving to the young and robust, who were able to defend the country in time of war. The king knew that this was a dreadful thing to do; but still he thought it was the wisest plan they could adopt.

Among the assembled people was Gambaruk Rudderling, a wise and beautiful lady, of distinguished rank. She was very much shocked at the horrible plan of murdering all the old people, — those who had once been

the bone and sinew of the country, but now, from the infirmity of years, could no longer labor, but instead, claimed the support and rest which they had well earned by their early toils.

This noble lady, with wise head and tender heart, stepped forward and addressed the assembly. She told them that their plan was barbarous, and that they would forever stain their country if they should permit the innocent, helpless, aged people to be inhumanly slain. She told them that *she* had a plan to propose, and that it was the wisest and most natural of any. She would advise that the aged and infirm should be nourished and strengthened upon the food which still remained to them, while the young and strong should go forth to seek a more fruitful country, where they could establish themselves, and find food and employment. The king and all the people, seeing at once the wisdom of this proposition, accepted it. The young men drew lots, and those upon whom the lots fell

assembled in a body, and together set out from Denmark, travelled into Italy, and there founded the kingdom of the Lombards.

Noble Lady Gambaruk Rudder... The young readers of this paper will be very glad if *they* could have an opportunity of doing so much good, and saving so many aged people from destruction. But the *sum* of many "little deeds of kindness," and many "little words of love," will make something even greater and nobler than the work of that lady of Denmark.

Perhaps some of you may have an aged grandmother living with you in your home. She may be blind and hard of hearing, yet her mind will be active, and she will want to know what is going on in the world and neighborhood. Do not think it a task to sit by her side, and in loud, clear tones, tell her the last newspaper reports, and the items of your locality which will interest her. Bear patiently all the questions she will ask, if she does not understand perfectly, and try to explain every thing to her satisfaction.

If she drops a stitch in her knitting, and asks you to make it right for her, do not let her wait until you have finished the paragraph you are reading, or the work you are anxious to finish; but run at once and assist her.

If grandmother comes down stairs in the morning, with her wig "hind part before," or her "cap on one side," don't laugh as if you thought it a good joke, but go to her kindly, and adjust it; anticipate her wants at table, and be interested in having dishes prepared which will tempt the failing appetite of the dear old lady. On Christmas, New Year's, and birthdays, give her some little present, which will be useful and pleasing to her, such as a nicely hemmed pocket handkerchief, a pretty night-cap of your own work, or a pair of soft slippers. Share your own sweetmeats and "goodies" with grandmother, and you will find that she likes them as well as you do yourself. In short, always be on the watch to make grandmother happy, and perhaps you can

make many bright spots in her life, which must have its hours of sadness and perhaps of suffering.

If you haven't a grandmother, find somebody else to be kind to. The world is full of people who constantly need your sympathy; and if you give it to them in "full measure, pressed down, and running over," you will do a greater work than ever Gambaruk Rudderling. Just think —

"What a world this might be,
If hearts were always kind;
If, friendship, none would slight thee,
And fortune prove less blind!

"O, what a world of beauty
A loving heart might plan,
If man but did his duty,
And helped his brother man!"

"There!" said Uncle Billy, when Johnny had finished; "there! ain't dem good sentiments? You can't 'xpect to do a great thing like dat grand lady away off dar, but if you is kind, and loving, and helping to de folks and creturs you see about you, and try

to make 'em all better than they be, and keep yerself allus good, and fit to be called de Lord's chile; why, dat is talent enough for you, and it says dat the sum of all dese is greater than only doing one monstrous, great, good act. But dar is one more 'xtract dat I'd like to hear you read. I'll find it in another paper, and it won't take you but a minute or two. It pints so to your case dat you must read it."

So Johnny persevered to please the old man, although he was very tired of reading so long. But he could not refuse his friend; so when the place was found he commenced the little story of

THE HEART'S-EASE.

"She hath done what she could." — Mark xiv. 8.

There is a good fable told about a king's garden, in which all at once the trees and flowers began to wither away: the oak, because it could not yield any fair flowers; the rose-bush, because it could bear no fruit; the

vine, because it had to cling to the wall, and could cast no cool shadow.

"I am of no use in the world," said the oak.

"I might as well die," said the rose-bush.

"What good can I do?" murmured the vine.

Then the king said, "What makes you so bright and blooming, when all the rest are fading?"

"I thought," said the little heart's-ease, "you wanted me here, because it was here you planted me, and so I thought I would try to be the best little heart's-ease that I could be."

Little reader, are you like the oak, and the rose-bush, and the vine, doing nothing because you cannot do as much as others are doing? or will you be like the heart's-ease, and do your very best in the little corner of the vineyard in which God's hand has put you?

"I must go now, Uncle Billy," said John-

ny, a few minutes after he had finished. There might be another "extract" he thought, and for the present he felt that he had read and taken in enough for one night.

His walk home through the clover-field was not a hurried one. He was thinking about the heart's-ease.

"I can do as well as she did, perhaps," thought Johnny, "even if I can't do anything more. She did her very best, made as much of herself as she could, though, of course, she never could be a rose or an oak, but she improved her one talent. If a little flower can do so well, certainly *I* can do something more than I have."

The crickets, hid away in the high grass and clover, chirped louder than ever, Johnny thought, when he made this good resolution, and seemed to sing to him,—

"Creak, creak, creak,
O, crickity-creak;
You can, we know,
Do exactly so."

Then the tree-toads, the owls, and the frogs all appeared to be interested, and to take up the words which rang in his ears, until he reached the back gate at his father's, and disappeared through the open kitchen-door.

CHAPTER IV.

JACK TUCKER'S ADVENTURE.

HULLLOA, Greenie ! how's your mathematics this morning?" shouted Jack Tucker to Johnny Greenleaf, when he made his appearance in the school-yard one morning.

"Can you tell how many fingers and toes a man has on his right hand, or how many spears of hair in his head it takes to make thirty? Hey? Where's your tongue? You'd better answer up sharp, or hold out your hand and get a lickin'."

Johnny hurried across the yard, went into the school-house, and sat down at his desk. He heard the coarse laugh of the boys outside, and their cry of "Coward ! baby !" He never was a favorite with them, and always felt better when he was out of their

way ; so he decided to remain in the room until the bell rung ; for he knew if he appeared in the yard, Tucker would hold him up to the ridicule of the boys, or else carry into execution his threat about the "lickin'."

Jack Tucker was the bully of the district-school. His father owned a paper-mill on Muddy Brook Stream, and sent his boy to Master Skillit's school to keep him out of mischief. He was the oldest and biggest boy in school, and as his father was a rich man, and one of the committee, Master Skillit shut his eyes to many of Jack's bad doings, and always tried to take his part, and let him off easy when the other children complained of him.

Most of the mischief which went on in and about the school-house and neighborhood was originated or helped along by Jack Tucker. If a boy's copy-book had a very bad blot, it was Jack Tucker who "joggled his elbow," and did it on purpose, that he might enjoy seeing Master Skillit ferule the boy. If a little fellow "stubbed

his toe," and fell flat on the school floor on his way to his class, it was Jack Tucker who stuck out his foot slyly, just in time to play, what seemed to him, a very good joke. If a boy laughed aloud when a paper "spit-ball" struck him suddenly on the end of his nose, it was Jack Tucker who "fired it," that he might excite Master Skillit's anger against the boy, and cause his getting a "a good whipping." If the key-hole of the outside door was filled up with plaster and rubbish, so that school had to be delayed several hours before an entrance could be effected, every body knew that Jack Tucker did it, or got some of the little boys to do it. Yet such was Jack's rule over the scholars, that it was only on rare occasions that one was bold enough to "tell the master" of him.

The trees in the neighboring orchards suffered in fruit seasons, and the farmers hated and watched all the children; for Jack managed to get them all under suspicion, while he himself went free by complaining

of the others. This bad boy used the other boys much in the way that the monkey did the cat's paws when he wanted to draw some hot potatoes out of the ashes. All the scholars hated and feared Jack, but scarcely one dared oppose or complain of him.

Johnny Greenleaf was almost the only one who was not ready to do Jack's bidding, and so he was bitterly hated by the "bully," who sought every opportunity of ridiculing and tormenting him. Yet Johnny was a timid boy, and so afraid of standing up for his own rights, that he even preferred to be called "coward! spoony! greeny! baby! parson! piety!" than yield obedience to a boy so bad as Jack Tucker.

Timid though he was about many things, he was generally brave enough to do right rather than wrong. Jack knew this, and so he sometimes plotted, with the help of the other boys, who did not dare refuse, to draw Johnny into snares where everything looked right and innocent, but where harm really existed under a deceptive cover. Johnny

was really very simple-minded for a boy of his years ; indeed, as his mother said, " he didn't seem to have a grain of spunk ; " so he was often " taken in " by the designing boys.

The day when Jack had inquired into the state of Johnny's mathematics, Johnny had taken care to be on his guard, and keep out of Jack's way ; and he managed so well that they did not meet until after the afternoon session, when they were on their way home.

Johnny was hurrying along, when a shrill whistle blew after him, and caused him to look around. There was Jack Tucker, and three or four other boys, running at full speed after him. At first Johnny thought he would take to his heels too ; but he knew he was no match for the sprightly boys behind him, and would only get caught and annoyed all the more, so he sauntered along, and waited to see what they wanted.

" Say, spoony ! " called Jack, as he drew near, " why didn't you answer me this morning ? Been puzzling your head about it ever

since? Come, now, my beauty, mount this 'ere stump, and give us an answer, or we'll see who is the smartest fellow!"

"I don't know anything about it," said Johnny; "and I can't stop now, for mother wants me at home."

"O! his mother wants him, does she?" said Jack, in mocking tones. "Well, I guess she'll have to wait a spell. Spoony couldn't go till he said his lesson. Got to keep him in. Now mount the stump, and say his lesson, like a good boy."

"Well, if you ain't a natural born fool to stand such talk, Johnny," said Sam Jenkins, "then I never saw one. Why don't you give it to him? Pitch into him! We'll stand by you, and see fair play!"

"Yes, pitch into him, *do*," mocked Jack. "Come on; I'm ready for you, and a dozen others just like you."

"There, Johnny, now you can't get off without a fight," said one of the boys.

"Yes, I can, too," replied Johnny. "I won't fight, any way. I'm going home."

"Coward! baby! Did he want to go home to his mammy? Well, he couldn't just now! Parson has got to spout a little first. Come, are you going to get up on that stump or not? We'll give him a boost, boys, for his crooked spindles can't get him up without!"

"I won't get up on that stump, and you shall not put me up there," said Johnny, quite resolutely at last, when he saw that the boys were in earnest.

"O, my! he's got some spunk after all, hasn't he? But still on to that stump he must go, and stay there until he gets his eyes open enough to say his lesson. Come on, boys, let's boost him!"

"You shan't touch me!" Johnny cried out. "Let me alone. I haven't done anything to you."

"Then, if he doesn't want to be touched, he must either say his lesson or fight. Come, there ain't much time for parleying," said Jack.

"O, leave him alone, Jack!" said Sam

Jenkins. "He's too small fry to waste time on. Come on, boys, it's getting late; we'd better be going home, and leave these two fellows here to fight it out alone if they want to."

"So I say," said another. "Come, let's go! See who'll spring that six-rail fence first! One, two, three!" and away they go, leaving Jack and Johnny looking very foolish by the roadside.

"That's mean, now!" called Jack after them. "If you don't rue it, then my name aint Jack Tucker! Come, then, you fool," said he to Johnny, "I'll let you off if you'll jump that ditch handsome for me. Come, a farmer's boy like you ought to have good spindles enough for that. Come on, I'll show you how. It takes legs like mine to go it," saying which Jack gave a smart leap to show his agility, and landed up to his neck in mud, slime, and water, in the middle of the ditch!

Anybody but Johnny would have laughed heartily at the figure the bad boy just then

presented; but Johnny was too much surprised to know what to do.

"Help me out!" roared Jack. "You stupid fool, what do you stand there gaping at me for? Don't you see I'm stuck? Be quick! I can't stand it long. I'm sinking now! Help me out!"

"If I'll help you out," said Johnny, in his moderate way, for he did not realize Jack's danger, "wont you give me a lickin'?"

"Won't I though, if you *don't* let me out! You confounded fool, don't you see I'm sinking?"

"No, are you?" said Johnny. "Well, promise you won't trouble me any more, and I'll see what I can do to get you out."

"O, yes, yes; anything, if I only get out of this horrid place. Come, be quick!"

Johnny looked around, and found an old rail which had fallen off from the fence; so with this he set to work to get Jack out. He was very much smaller than Jack, so the job didn't promise to be an easy one.

"Why don't you let him help himself

out," said a voice in his ear. "He's no friend of yours, and as likely as not, as soon as he gets out, he'll turn around and pitch you in, and leave you there, just out of spite because he got in himself." It was the tempting voice of his dark angel which said this.

"Come; he'd do that very thing to you," it went on to say. "It will be good for him. Nobody knows he is here. Run home and leave him. Nobody would blame you if it was known. You're a fool to get him out!"

"Johnny! Johnny! remember the Heart's-Ease! Do what you can for Jack. You know the resolution which you made coming through the clover-field. You know what you said once about helping anybody who was in trouble, just as much as you would a bird or a squirrel. Here is a good chance for you! Improve it!" This was the voice of the good angel, which hovers over the right shoulder, and helps every one to do right.

"I'm coming, Jack!" shouted Johnny, as he grasped the rail and dragged it along to the ditch as best he could. "There, I guess I can rest one end of it on that big rock down in the ditch, and let the other end rest on the shore, so you can get hold of the plank and climb up the bank. I'd give you my hand to pull you out, if I was not so much smaller than you. But if I should try now, it would pull me right in, just like the fable where the fox was in a well, and called to the goat to come in too, and drink the water which was so clear and cool. The goat jumped down, and the fox jumped up on his back, got hold of his horns, and helped himself out, letting the goat stay in, and telling him he was a fool for his pains."

"*You* are a fool to chatter like that when you see a feller in my plight," sulkily exclaimed Jack, as he crept up the bank and shook off some of the mud and slime. "Now what am I going to do, I should like to know? I can't go home in this way."

What would the mill operatives say to see the only son of the Honorable Squire Tucker come up the street, and go into his father's elegant house, all covered up in dirt like a beggar? *You* are the cause of this, John Greenleaf, and I'll pay you for it yet, you spooney! Come, now, strip off your clothes, and let me put 'em on, and go home a little more decent than I am now. I'll take your old clothes, and give you mine which are much better. Your marm can wash them for you, and they'll do for your Sunday-go-to-meetin's for many a year."

"Mine wouldn't fit you," said Johnny, pleasantly, determined to remember the resolution of which the good angel had reminded him. "I don't want your clothes either. I wouldn't give much for them after the polishing they've got to-day."

"None of your sauce now," said the angry boy. "What am I going to do, anyhow? Why don't you tell me something?"

"I don't know what to tell you," said Johnny, innocently. "I guess you'll have

to go home just as you are. I should think you would want to get those dirty clothes off. They don't smell very sweet."

"Hold your tongue, you fool! Don't you speak again until I speak to you."

"You spoke to me then: wanted me to tell you what to do. I guess I've thought of something. We can cut right across the fields here, — nobody 'll see us, — and come out about a mile up at Billy Grimes'. He'll fix you up first rate, I know. So if you want to go, I'll show you the way."

"Old nigger Grimes, I suppose you mean? No, sir! no nigger shall lay his black paw on me. My father and I don't vote for niggers. We go the Democratic ticket; or rather, father does; and I'm going to as soon as I'm old enough. Don't I wish I was now! I'd let the niggers know who I am! Pshaw! Old Grimes is nothing but a nigger! What can he do?"

"I shan't tell you, or take you there, if that's the way you're going to talk. Billy Grimes is one of the best men in this town,

and I won't let anybody say a word against him !”

“ O, ho ! you won't, won't ye ? How are you going to help it ? Hey ? Best man in town ! Best monkey you mean. Father says they ain't much more than monkeys now, and once, not so very long ago, he says they were *real* monkeys. But I don't care ; monkey or not, if he can get me out of this scrape I guess I'll give him a call.”

“ But I shan't show you the way until you take back what you said about Uncle Billy.”

“ All right then, if that's what you want. He's bully, I've no doubt. Bring on your nigger, and then I'll give you my opinion.”

“ No, but you've got to say that he ain't a monkey, but he's one of the best men in our town.”

“ Well, then, he ain't a monkey, as far as I know ; and as for his being the very best man in our town, you can bet your hat on that. Does that suit you ?”

“ Well, I'll take you there, if you'll be

respectful and thankful for what Uncle Billy does for you."

"Then I'm your man, see if I ain't. Hurry! Show up your old nig — O, — Uncle Billy I mean, and see if I can't do the handsome. How these muddy clothes do feel when I run! You're the cause of it, and I'll — O, I mean how far did you say it was to that old nig — to Uncle Billy's?"

"It ain't much more than a mile across these fields, but it is 'most two 'round. Take care there, Jack, don't go tramping down all that grain! Squire Grunter will set his dog on you, for he's always on the lookout."

"I'll tell him it's you did it — no, no, I mean I ain't afraid of the dog, or Grunter either, as to that. If I choose to go through this field, it's nobody's business; and I'll trample down as much grain as I like."

"You have no right to do so," said Johnny. "You wouldn't do it to your own field, and you ought to feel just the same about anybody else's."

"You don't say so! Where did you get so much?"

"I shall keep along here by the stone wall, anyhow, and if you *will* go through the grain, I can't help it."

"No, I reckon you can't. That's the best thing you've said yet. My gracious! there's Grunter's big watch-dog after us? Now you'll get it, John Greenleaf. You've got to take as much as I have, anyway. I'm glad of it; serves you just right for getting me into this scrape. What a big dog! Here, doggy, doggy! Good fellow! Here's the boy you want, along there by the wall! Sist! Sist! Take him, sir!"

"Doggy" saw the matter in a different light. All the way through the grain he had sniffed Jack's dirty clothes; and as Jack was the boy who had been doing all the mischief, the dog gave his whole attention to him.

"Gracious! he's torn the seat right out of my pants! O Johnny! come here and help me! He's got one of my shoes off,

and is tearing it up! He's torn the legs of my pants all to rags! O Johnny! come here, I say! He'll kill me!"

Just then Squire Grunter was seen coming along by the wall with a stout cudgel in his hand.

"Hold him, Grip! hold him, old fellow!" shouted the squire."

Jack tried to run, but he felt the dog's teeth, and had to give up.

"Ah, ha! you young beggar; now I guess I've got ye!" said Mr. Grunter, as he took Jack by the collar and gave him a good shaking.

"I ain't a beggar!" cried Jack. "I'm Honorable Squire Tucker's eldest son!"

"Ha! ha! that's a good one! So you b'long to old Tucker, do you? That's lucky, for he's been doing me a mean trick lately, and I guess I can't do any better than to take my pay out of your dirty little hide. You must love dirt to be going round in that shape. But you might as well have some of it outside as to have it all inside.

I know your folks: but I thought they'd rather keep the dirt on their souls, than outside on their bodies."

"I got into a ditch," said the trembling Jack, "and that is what makes me look so."

"Well, you'll get into another ditch some of these days, and there you'll stick. It is just the place for the whole kit of you, and I reckon you'll all get in there soon enough. How do you like the make of my cudgel? Feel nice?" said the man, as he gave Jack some smart blows.

"O! O!" roared Jack. "Stop it! You'd better stop, if you know what's good for you. My father 'll give it to you!"

"Ha! ha! ha! will he though? He's had all out of me that he'll ever get, and now I'm going to take my pay. How do you like it?"

"O! O! I don't like it at all. Won't you please to stop, mister? I didn't mean to get into your grain. That Greenleaf boy

made me. I never came here before; he showed me the way."

"Take that for the lie you've just told!" said Mr. Grunter, giving him a hard blow. "You mean puppy! You're a chip of the old block! You want to get off yourself by putting the blame upon somebody else. I know that Greenleaf boy. He goes across here, along by the wall, most every day. He never gives me any trouble. My dog smells the villain. I always trust him. Getting to like the cudgel, ain't ye?"

"Mr. Grunter!" called Johnny from the stone wall, "please don't beat him any more. I guess he won't do it again."

"Well, take that! and that! and that! Now, if you feel like promising and keeping your word I guess I'll let you go this time."

"Yes, sir, I will," cried Jack, making a great effort to speak plain through his tears and pain. "I'll promise you that as long as I live, I'll never set my foot into your field or

any of your land again. I'll be very thankful to you if you'll let me go now."

"Will you though? Well, I guess I've limbered you a little, and so I'll let you go. Strike a bee line right across that path, and don't you ever let me set eyes on you again."

Jack started off as fast as he could, feeling sore and stiff in every joint, and aching with shame and pain.

Little was said by either boy until they reached the road.

"I ain't a-going to stand this any longer!" exclaimed Jack, who had been meditating upon his grievances. "I don't care how I look; I'm going straight home. I don't see why I didn't do it at first. I can tell my folks how you got me into that ditch, and then got me a lickin' afterwards; and if my father don't give it to you, then my name ain't Jack Tucker. Your old nigger can go to Jericho for all we care: I was a fool to think of going there!"

"Very well," said Johnny; "you needn't

go. I thought you wanted to be fixed up before you went home, and I knew Uncle Billy would be glad to do it for you."

"O, yes, reckon he would! It would be quite an honor for him to do a favor for Honorable Squire Tucker's oldest son. Niggers don't have such a chance every day."

"No, that isn't the reason why he would do it," said Johnny; "'cause he would just as soon do it for Paddy O'Toole's little boy. He always helps everything that he can, — boys, animals, and birds; and then I guess, as he knows how your father hates and works against colored people, that he would be glad to help you, because it would be returning good for evil."

"Come, hold your chatter: I don't care for your nigger. But let me tell you one thing. If you ever tell anybody what has happened to me to-day, I'll give you such a lickin' as you never had in your life before. Do you hear?"

"I'm sure I don't want to tell anybody,"

said Johnny; "but I guess they'd laugh if they knew."

"I'll make you laugh the other side of your mouth if I ever hear of this again!" Saying which, Jack turned up the road, and walked away in the direction of his home, and Johnny went on towards his father's farm.

CHAPTER V.

JOHNNY GREENLEAF'S LOSS. — THE
NOBLE WISH.

IT was a pleasant autumn day. The air was chilly out of doors, and wood fires had begun to be very comfortable, and indeed almost indispensable within. Yet summer lingered in sunny spots, and the south wind, as it searched for the flowers, still found them bright and blooming, wearing their richest attire; for the season was getting so late that they felt it was their last opportunity of displaying their brilliant toilets.

The golden rod on the edge of the wood swayed back and forth, and toyed with the wind, scattering its favors in golden showers upon the green, velvety moss at its feet. The scarlet seeds of the wild rose

flamed up brightly against the blue sky, and the crimsoned berries of the barberry bushes hung juicy and ripe, telling the old women in sun-bonnets, who went searching for them, that they were all ready for the preserving kettle, and were quite willing to be smothered in sugar during the cold winter months. A few cardinal flowers still lingered by the mill brook; and on the sandy side of Walnut Hill, near Grimes' hut, the beautiful blue gentians, blue as the bright September sky, or the first violets of spring, held up their fringed cups to catch the autumn odors. Wild asters, in robes of rich purple, lilac, white and pink, whispered to each other, and seemed to be making the most of the happy autumn days. Many of the creeping plants, which clamber up the trees, had changed their color in the frosty nights, and now wound to the top of the trees in spiral wreaths of scarlet and golden yellow leaves. Wild grape-vines in the woods, clinging to stone walls, and twining about maples, old apple trees, and alders,

hung with great bunches of juicy, purple fruit. Huckleberry bushes and blackberry vines glowed with gorgeous colors. The trees appeared in their fullest glory of crimson, russet, brown, scarlet, Indian yellow, and even the bright emerald green, with which the frost so often touches the trees. Oaks were brown, cuir, russet, and yellow, with brown acorns, lying on the ground, beneath them. Walnut trees were either yellow or vivid green, and heaps of their faded, crumpled leaves lay upon the ground or rustled and blew about in the sweeping wind. The beautiful leaves of the chestnut trees were of a golden tint, and thickly covering the ground were their prickly burrs, enclosing, in snug, gray velvet-lined chambers the glossy, rich tinted shells which contain the sweet, white fruit. Maples were glorious in crimson, scarlet, and gold; and, indeed, all nature seemed to be holding a high festival.

Johnny Greenleaf sat on the front door-sill at his father's house. Coming down the

hill before him were a pair of sleek, brown oxen, dragging a cart heaped high with yellow ears of Indian corn. A narrow thread of a brook, with its tiny pools and waterfalls, ran along near the house, and babbled down into a glen, which was full of flaming swamp maples. Across the road, in the cultivated field, great golden squashes and pumpkins lay ripening in the sun. Purple cabbages and crimson beets looked up into the clear blue sky, and proclaimed themselves ready for the harvest.

These sights and sounds impressed themselves forcibly upon Johnny that afternoon. All the beautiful things in nature were very dear to this boy; and he lived so much out of doors, that even with but little aid from books, he had become familiar with most of the plants, trees, animals, birds, and insects of his native fields and woods.

But this autumn day, more than a year after that scene in Squire Grunter's wheat-field, Johnny sat quietly upon the door-sill, seeing and hearing the pleasant things

about him, yet looking very sad and distressed.

His mother was dead ! That very afternoon the friends and neighbors had gathered to look for the last time upon the remains of Mrs. Greenleaf, hear the solemn, impressive funeral service, and then bear the body away to its resting-place in the small family burying-ground, a short distance from the house. After the funeral, Parson Putman and some of the neighbors said a few kind words of consolation to Johnny and his father ; and then, one after another, the people went away, until only Mr. Greenleaf's sister, aunt Mehitabel, Johnny, and his father were left.

Mrs. Greenleaf, a thrifty, stirring, hard-working woman, had toiled beyond her strength the summer just past, and in the early autumn was suddenly called away from the earthly scenes she so much loved. Throughout the county, Mrs. Greenleaf was esteemed as an excellent housekeeper and a "driving woman." No butter was so sweet

and golden, and no cheese so nice and rich, as that which she made. Not a farmer's wife in that region could make such clear currant jelly, or preserve quinces, plums, and pears so well. The drop cakes, custards, Indian puddings, and brown bread which were made in the Greenleafs' kitchen were always famous for their excellence.

In that house every room was in perfect order. Even impertinent flies scarcely dared to venture into those rooms which were kept sacred to neatness and darkness. Up stairs, in the high, old-fashioned, oaken chest of drawers, in the best chamber, were folded and stored away between rose leaves and sprigs of lavender, piece after piece of snowy white homespun linen cloth, which the busy hands of Mrs. Greenleaf had made, when she was a girl in her father's farmhouse. Here too were rolls of soft flannel, and piles of hand-knit country woollen stockings, all of which the busy, industrious woman had made with her own hands, from the sheep on her father's farm. The high, four-

posted bedstead in this best chamber was heaped up with plump feather beds, every feather of which had been saved by the thrifty housekeeper. Old-fashioned, nicely-pieced patch-work quilts covered the beds, and told plainly enough of the handiwork of the mistress.

A faded sampler, framed in varnished mahogany, and a "mourning-piece," worked on satin with "floss," representing a very bluish-green weeping willow of peculiar shape, bending over a white monument, upon which was written, in an old-fashioned hand, the record of some deaths in the Scratchgravel family, while a tall man in country-cut clothes, and a woman in a big bonnet, holding a monstrous white handkerchief to her face, bore witness to the industrious habits, if not to the artistic taste, of Mrs. Greenleaf.

Not only this best chamber, but every room, from the attic, with its bunches of dried herbs, strings of dried apples, ears of popping corn, bags of pieces for mending,

old chests of hoarded garments, spinning-wheels, old chairs minus their rush bottoms, huge, heavy red wooden cradle, in which Johnny, and many of his ancestors before him, had been rocked—from this attic, where even rubbish was made to have a tidy appearance, down through the common sleeping-rooms, the darkened parlor, family sitting-room and dairy, to the cellar, with its clean sanded floor, bins of potatoes, turnips, carrots, beets, onions, and cabbages, barrels of hardy Baldwins, greenings, and russets, barrels of cider, kegs of elderberry wine, and hanging shelves full of jars containing preserved barberries, purple damsons, green-gages with clear golden syrup, fragrant quinces, and a wonderful abundance of pots of honey, pickled cucumbers and peppers, and the famous things which country house-keepers like to prepare for their families in winter ; through all this space, and in every particular, the house gave evidence of the untiring energy and scrupulous neatness

of the hard-working, industrious woman, who had so lately stood at its head.

Mrs. Greenleaf's virtues were mostly those of a good housekeeper and manager. She felt that these were her especial callings or professions, and she certainly devoted herself to them with great zeal. She was, however, not only mistress of the house, but the farm-work generally went on pretty much as she planned it, for Mr. Greenleaf acknowledged his wife's superior judgment, and allowed her to manage the house, farm, her husband, and son. Now that she had been so suddenly called away, the father and son felt at first that they were adrift on a broad, unknown sea, with no firm hand at the helm. Mr. Greenleaf loved and honored his wife, and thought her equal could not be found among women; and Johnny loved his mother, and thought she was always in the right, though sometimes he could not see how that was exactly so.

But mother was dead, and Johnny sat lonely and sad upon the front door-sill. He

forgot all the housekeeping qualities, and busy, bustling, driving ways, and only remembered that she was his *mother*, — the only mother he could ever have, and now taken away from him ; and he and father, who was fast growing old and infirm, left alone.

" O, how I wish I could always have done everything to please mother ! " thought Johnny. " She was so smart, and could do so many things, that it made her feel bad to see me so lazy. But I tried hard to please her, and work as she wanted me to. She said I didn't take after her ; and I don't think I did ; for folks called her a real smart woman, and nobody ever called me a smart boy. They say they don't know what I'm coming to, for I can't take hold and do anything that is good for anything. I know that I cannot buy, and sell, and make money like the folks around here, and I don't want to, either. If I could ever do anything to help people see, and love, and think about the beautiful things which God has made, I think they would love him, and all people and things in the

world better, and everybody would be good and kind, and never have any mean, cruel, and ugly ways to each other. Perhaps I can help people so some day, if I learn to be like it myself first. I must do better at school though; but I can't see now why ministers, and folks who try to do others good, think they must study books so much. Perhaps that's the way they find out how to go to work and do what they want to for people; if it is, I believe I could study hard for that."

So Johnny thought on, as many boys do, looking ahead to the time when he should be a man. His mother's death had made him more thoughtful than usual, and this autumn day, as he looked out upon the lovely scenes in nature, there came to him, for the first time, the clearly-formed wish that he might do something to help people to be as good, beautiful, and pure as the sunshine, brooks, trees, and flowers. It was, perhaps, a singular thought for a boy of his years—a boy whom the farmers' wives called a "natural," an "idiot," one who

never would be able to "drive sharp bargains," and "lay up money."

The people about him never hesitated to tell him that he was a "good-for-nothing," an "idler;" and the poor boy had many times been so troubled and pained by what they said, that he felt if they could only see with different eyes, they would never do anything to wound the feelings of one of God's creatures. It may be that this was the cause of his first thought about the matter, but as the subject staid in his mind, it at last came out in the definite wish which he had expressed. What to do, and how to do it, were matters which were far ahead, for as yet Johnny's one talent was like a little grain of mustard seed, just planted in the ground. Little by little it must grow, for it could not spring up and bear fruit at once.

"Little by little," an acorn said,
As it slowly sank in its mossy bed;
"I am improving every day,
Hidden deep in the earth away."
Little by little each day it grew,
Little by little it sipped the dew;

Downward it sent out a thread-like root,
Up in the air sprung a tiny shoot;
Day after day, and year after year,
Little by little the leaves appear;
And the slender branches spread far and wide,
Till the mighty oak is the forest's pride.

"Little by little," said a thoughtful boy;
"Moment by moment I'll well employ,
Learning a little every day,
And not spending all my time in play:
And still this rule in my mind shall dwell:
'Whatever I do, I will do it well.'
Little by little I learn to know
The treasured wisdom of long ago;
And one of these days, perhaps, will see,
That the world will be the better for me."
And well do we know that this simple plan
Must make him a wise and a useful man.

CHAPTER VI.

JACK TUCKER'S BOYS. — GOOD OUT OF EVIL.

COME on, Sam Jenkins, you can't back down now. When I make up my mind to anything I'm determined to carry it through. Nobody can touch us. Father is rich, and his money can buy up all the lawyers in town if there is need of it. Folks will call it 'sowing our wild oats;' and as for father, he will pretend to look solemn, 'cause he belongs to Parson Putnam's church, and old nigger Grimes belongs there too; but I know it will only be make-believe, for he hates niggers worse than I do, and he left the other church, and wouldn't pay 'em a cent of money, just because Mr. Pomroy always would preach and pray about niggers instead of preaching the gospel. So

come on, don't worry yourself; I'll take all the blame if there is any."

"I don't see the fun, Jack Tucker. The old nigger never troubled me any, and I haven't got anything against him. I guess I won't go with you."

"No, you don't get off in that style. If you don't go with me and help me through it, I'll tell old Blake that it was you who poisoned his hound. I can do it just as well as not, and get the reward he has offered."

"But you know I didn't mean to poison the dog. I was trying some experiments for our chemistry lesson, and some of the mixtures got scattered about our yard, and that greyhound must come sneaking around and eat it."

"So you say, but old Blake won't believe you. I could make out a good story to him, and get my reward, for the hound did come to his death from poison dropped by your hand."

"Well, if you do tell him so, you're the meanest fellow I've seen yet."

"Ha! ha! You calling me mean, when you are trying to sneak out of this job that I've planned and got all ready for! You gave me to understand that you'd go with me; and if you don't, as sure as you are born, I'll go right and tell old Blake about you, and get the twenty-five dollars reward, which you will have to pay over to Blake, besides taking any punishment he chooses to give you. I've got you there. Ha! ha! ha!"

Sam Jenkins was a poor boy, and twenty-five dollars was more than he ever had at one time in his life. He knew the character of Jack Tucker well, and he felt that he would do as he said, and that it was quite true that Mr. Blake, the hot-headed old banker, would not believe a word which he himself might say to convince him that the poisoning was accidental instead of intentional; but he would prefer to believe Jack Tucker, whose father was rich, especially as he could tell him that he had found the fellow who poisoned his valuable hound,

and that he had positive proof of it from the boy's own lips.

Poor Sam felt that he was in Jack's power: Jack had wonderful tact in getting the boys under him in that way. Sam was intimidated and frightened, and did not dare to stand up for the right while Jack held him so. Poor fellow! There are many like him who grow to manhood, and for fear of their fellows, take the back road, though their own inclinations would carry them along the right way. Woe be to those who tempt such weak ones! It were better for them that a millstone were hung about their necks, and they were drowned in the depths of the sea.

Jack watched Sam as he saw his threat working upon him. He felt pretty sure of his game, though he saw that Sam needed some encouragement.

"Come on, you chicken-hearted fellow!" said Jack, patting him encouragingly on the back, "come along. I tell you there's noth-

ing to fear. It is only a little sport for dull weather. You know

‘A little nonsense now and then
Is relished by the best of men.’

Come, you used to be a brave fellow. I don't see what has got into you now, unless you've been to some of those revival meetings, and got your head full of stuff about the world's coming to an end, and you going to be burned up, if you don't put on your robe, cut the acquaintance of good fellows like us, preach, pray, and exhort us, and, to sum it all up, make a fool of yourself generally.”

“Nonsense!” said Sam, laughing easily, as Jack intended he should, at what was meant for a stroke of wit; “I don't know anything about the revival meetings. Guess you've been there yourself, you seem to know so much of them!”

“Well, yes, I'm pretty well posted. Drop in occasionally to hear sister Stevens and brother Robinson spout. They're famous. Good place to go to of a dull night. Lots

of fun going on there. Let's see, your mother is one of the sisters, ain't she?"

"None of your business! Let my mother's name alone. Come, I thought you were in a terrible hurry just now to be off to Billy Grimes'. Come along, if you're going, now that I'm in the mood for it."

"All right, old feller! You're the very brick I took you to be. Now I'm sure of you, I'll tell you my plan. It comes off to-night. It will be cloudy, but not dark. There is a moon, but it will be clouded over most of the time, just to accommodate us, you know. All Nature smiles, and lends a helping hand. You see I'm something of a poet. When 'the village clock the hour of eight, good sir, has struck,' — poetry again, — you are to take that old fish-horn that we used to have out on 'Pope night,' and stand 'round the corner of Peter Parsons' barn, and give two good blasts, which are to be signals for the boys to meet at Tom Libbey's barn, and get on their rigging. Do you see?"

"No, I don't see why I've got to blow the horn."

"Well, if you can't blow a horn, you ain't good for much, anyhow. Any simpleton could do that."

"Then do it yourself."

"Do you mean to insinuate? Come, come, Sam, I ain't going to quarrel with you. Come, you'll like it when you get about it. I've got so much to do with the matter, that really I shall not have time to blow the horn, though of course I'd as lief do it myself. It isn't much to do. Well, as I was saying, after you blow the horn, loud and clear, so that the boys will hear, you just cut over to Tom Libbey's, and we'll all be there in less than no time. You know all the fellers. I didn't invite many; only a few that I was sure of, — Ned Griggs, George Robinson, Jim White, Frank Jones, Ed Stevens, and one or two more of that stripe. I can trust them, for if the devil wanted a neat job done, he would be sure to call on some of them to do it."

"I thought you said there was no harm in what you are going to do. I should think there was if you've got such a scaly set of fellows on your list. Yes, it is true enough that the devil couldn't pick out better fellows to do his work. I won't go with you!—there now. I have too much respect for my mother, if nothing else. She never brought me up to keep company with such people as these. They ain't worth wiping my old shoes on."

"So, ho! You don't say! Come, Sam, you don't seem like yourself. To be sure these fellows ain't anything of themselves; can't begin to come up to us, of course; but they are good to make use of when you want them. They are pretty scaly and tricky I know, but I believe I've got 'em all where the wool is short. Nothing like knowing the weaknesses of your fellows! I picked you out for the most responsible and genteel part of the work,—just standing still and blowing the horn. I'm sure you could not do anything easier or prettier. But I

must go now ; I've an engagement. I can rely on you, I know. The hound, you know, will serve to remind us of each other. Farewell, my brave Sam, as the novels say, we shall meet again." Jack waved his hand in a graceful, provoking way, and walked rapidly down the street.

It was a struggle with Sam, as he looked after him, to decide whether to keep clear of the job or not. It fretted and tired him to think about it, so he put it out of his mind, and went home to supper.

When the clock struck eight, however, he was at his station on the corner near Peter Parsons' barn, blowing his tin horn for the signal, as Jack had appointed. Hearing this unusual noise in the still winter evening, Peter Parsons, an old man who lived in the house adjoining the barn, raised the window, and, cautiously peeping out, recognized Sam Jenkins as he ran down the road and dodged into Tom Libbey's barn. "Ay, ay," said the old man, "something's up. I'll remember this."

"All here?" asked Jack Tucker, as he raised the lantern and looked around upon his assembled friends.

"Ay, ay, I reckon," said one of the boys.

"Got all your clothes ready? What are you going to be dressed in, George Robinson?"

"O, I'm going to be dressed like the devil, with horns on my head and an old sheep skin over my body, a cloven foot, and a long, forked tail sticking out behind. Philo Willis and I got it up. He's worn it many a time."

"Good ! good !" shouted the boys. "You're a first rate representation of his majesty. What tricks you don't know, ain't worth knowing!"

"I'm going to be dressed in wool," said Ed Stevens. "I'm going to be a wolf in sheep's clothing. That is, I must dress like a sheep, I suppose, but when I git to Grimes' I'll act like a wolf. Mother fixed me up. She enters right into the sport of the thing."

"What's your rigging, Frank Jones?"

"Wall, I specelated some on what I'd better wear, but at last concluded I'd dress like a widder, who is fishin' around for a husband. I've been taking lessons this good while, and I know how to act prudish, and artful, and deceitful, and humble, and patient, and the whole list of Christian virtues; forgiving my enemies, and not holding anything agin anybody unless I happen to git a good chance to scratch their eyes out, and even then I'll pretend I didn't do it, but I don't bear 'em the leastest resentment in the world."

"Nonsense, Frank. A widder bewitched won't be of any account in our party. What can such a character do?"

"What *can't* she do? I'd like to know. If I don't do more mischief on the sly than the whole batch of you put together, then my name ain't Jones."

"Let him have it, Jack. He knows his cards like the rest of his folks. I'll warrant you that he can hoe out his row with any of us."

The boys chose characters to suit their tastes, and when all were dressed in old clothes to correspond, they presented a ludicrous and strange appearance. Thus equipped, they took their way cautiously over the crispy snow, through Squire Grunter's fields, to the hut of Billy Grimes. None knew exactly what they were to do there. It is exciting enough to assemble secretly at the blast of the horn, equip themselves in comical or frightful garments, then creep over the snow, under cover of the cloudy night, and assemble about Grimes' dilapidated old black hut, and then do whatever Jack Tucker might suggest.

None of the party, except Jack, had any ill will towards Uncle Billy. The old man was always quiet and peaceable, and never was known to do any save kind acts to those with whom he came in contact.

"He is a nigger," said Jack Tucker, "and that is crime enough. Besides, he is aider and abettor of that spooney Greenleaf, and he is all the time filling his head full of

nonsense about his being too good to associate with us, and do my bidding. If I could catch them together I'd serve them both alike, but just now we've got to give our attention to Grimes. You station yourselves all around the shanty so that he can't escape, and I'll look in and see what he is about."

A few window-lights had been put in for the winter, and the rest of the window was carefully boarded up to keep out the cold. Peeping in through the dingy little lights, Jack saw Uncle Billy sitting before a few smouldering embers on the hearth, with his great Bible on his knees, his spectacles on his nose, and a brass candlestick, holding a dripping tallow candle, by his side. He seemed absorbed in his reading, but at last, as if having finished that part of his devotions, he shut his book, and, resting his hands on the arms of his old, creaking, rickety rocking-chair, he moved slowly back and forth, and commenced singing, in a cracked voice, to a very monotonous tune,

an old Southern plantation hymn, which he learned, as he would have said, "yars and yars ago."

All the boys outside could distinctly hear the words as he droned them out.

"O, blow your trumpet, Gabriel,
Blow your trumpet louder;
And I want dat trumpet to blow me home
To my new Jerusalem.

"De prettiest ting dat ever I done
Was to serve de Lord when I was young.
So blow your trumpet, Gabriel,
Blow your trumpèt louder.

"O, Satan is a liar, and he can conjure too,
And if you don't mind he'll conjure you.
So blow your trumpet, Gabriel,
Blow your trumpet louder."

"That's true! So he will, Jack Tucker. Satan is conjuring you now. Shame on you for bothering the old darkey. Let him alone!" said Sam Jenkins, in a loud whisper.

"Hold your tongue, Sam Jenkins," said Jack, angrily, raising his hand as if to strike him. "If you come any of your dodges now, we'll serve you out too."

Uncle Billy struck into another tune, quite as monotonous, though of a different style, from the first.

"You may talk of my name as much as you please,
And carry my name abroad,
But I really do believe I'm a child of God
As I walk in de heavenly road.
O, won't you go wid me?
O, won't you go wid me?
O, won't you go wid me?
For to keep our garments clean.

"O, Satan is a mighty busy ole man,
And roll rocks in my way:
But Jesus is my bosom friend,
And roll 'em out ob de way.
O, won't you go wid me?
O, won't you go wid me?
O, won't you go wid me?
For to keep our garments clean.

"Come, my brudder, if you never did pray,
I hope you may pray to-night;
For I really believe I'm a child of God
As I walk in de heavenly road.
O, won't you go wid me?
O, won't you go wid me?
O, won't you go wid me?
For to keep our garments clean."

"Just hear him, Jack," said Sam. "I don't see how you can stand that. I can't, anyway. I'm going home."

"Well, go 'long, and be done with it. But you'll hear from me again. Now, fellers," said Jack, "this old nigger has got through with his jubilee, and as soon as he gets safe in bed we'll commence our fun.

When Uncle Billy had finished his singing, he knelt down and prayed in a loud voice a prayer of thanksgiving for the mercies and blessings of his life, a request that they might be continued, and that the Lord would rock him in his arms as a mother doth her infant. Not only for himself did he pray, but for all mankind everywhere. He prayed that his people in bondage might be set free; that the prisoner might repent of his sins and seek the Lord; that the sailor and the traveller might be guided in their wanderings; that the farmers' crops might be blessed; that all who were in sorrow and sickness might be relieved; and that the Lord would keep the whole world in "the hollow of his hand, and the bend of his arm, until the storm of the wicked is overblown."

When he had exhausted every subject, and there seemed to be nothing more to say, he slowly and tremulously rose from his knees and prepared to retire. An old-fashioned bedstead stood in one corner, and very soon all but Uncle Billy's flannel night-capped head was comfortably hidden away beneath the old ragged bed coverings. His light-stand, brass-candlestick, a fresh candle, and a card of matches stood by his bedside, to be "handy" if they should be wanted in the night.

The heavy breathing, with now and then a snore, soon told the boys that Uncle Billy was in the land of dreams.

"Now for Gabriel's trumpet," said Jack Tucker. "He'll think the end of the world has come, I guess. When I say 'three!' you blow that tin horn with all your might, Jim. Then you others, with the speaking-trumpets, old tin pans, bass viol, and drum, put all your strength into your instruments and then shout, 'Brudder Grimes, de sperits call for you!'"

"All right," answered the boys.

"One, two, three!" called Jack, in a low voice. Instantly all the boys responded, and the night air was made hideous with frightful noises.

Startled from sudden sleep, Uncle Billy jumped up in bed, and shouted, "Who's dar?" The answer came from a multitude of voices, "Brudder Grimes, de sperrits call for you!"

"Gracious marcy!" shouted Uncle Billy. "I've got on my old flannel night-cap. Do you want me right away?"

"Now is the accepted time!" answered the voices.

"Who be ye, anyhow?" called the old man.

"The angel Gabriel, with his trumpet and friends?"

"Yer don't talk much like him, I reckon. 'Pears like he wouldn't come dat are way. Jest wait till I git my candle lit, and have time to 'sider the matter."

"We want you just as you are. Come out here, or we shall come in!"

"Reckon I couldn't let yer in, fur I know now dat yer didn't come from de Lord, anyway. De Lord's folks wouldn't hurry and bother me so. Dey would wait 'till I made myself 'spectable, anyhow."

"Open the door, you old black nigger, and we'll show you who we are."

The door was firmly secured by a heavy iron bar and padlock, and there was no other means of entrance to the house.

"We'll carry this door by storm," said Jack. "Now throw yourselves against it with all your might." With one accord they rushed against the door, but it stood firm as a rock, and was in no danger of giving way.

Uncle Billy peeped out of the window, and saw grotesque looking figures dancing about in the snow, and trying to find means of entering the house. They were all half-grown boys, he thought, disguised as devils, animals, and women.

"Shame on 'em," thought the old man, "to be coming here dis yer time of night jest on parpose to trouble old Billy."

"Boys," said he, "what ye want to be up to sech tricks fur? Now, ye'd better go right home peaceably, and leave alone an old man who hain't done ye a speck of harm."

"No, you don't, old nig," said George Robinson, who seemed to be spokesman now. "We don't go home 'till we've had some fun out of you, and pay you off for being a nigger, and stuffing that Greenleaf boy's head full of piety."

Uncle Billy turned away from the window, and thought, as he might have to stay up all night, that he would make a fire on the hearth. He kept his kindlings, and a good pile of wood, in an adjoining room, so with these he soon made up a rousing fire.

"The devil! Fire and smoke! Stop your machine, can't you?" cried a smothered voice from the chimney.

"What is it?" cried Uncle Billy, trying

to look up the chimney. Just at that moment, down came a heavy body, which would have crushed the old man had he not dexterously ducked his head out of the way.

"Bress the Lord for presarving me from de stones of my enemies!" said Uncle Billy, who thought a rock had been thrown down to crush him. But hearing groans from the fireplace, he turned in surprise to know the cause of them, and perceived a grotesquely dressed figure lying across the burning logs, apparently much more dead than alive. He quickly pulled it out of the fire, tore off some of the masquerade, and brought to light the well-known face and form of Jack Tucker. The boy was nearly dead, or at least quite insensible. He had left his party, determined to find an entrance to the hut, get in himself, let in the fellows, drive the old man out into the cold, then snow-ball and torment him, tie him to the big elm, and leave him to suffer with the cold, or freeze to death, as he might, until

some person happened along that way in the morning to release him.

No good chance of entering being found, Jack climbed up the low roof, and prepared to go down the big chimney, take Uncle Billy by surprise, and, before he had time to stop him, unbar the door and let in the boys.

But his course had been stopped. Thus far could he go, but no farther. The Lord will not suffer wickedness always to prevail. Often he maketh the wicked to fall by his own wickedness, as in this case. Fire, flames, and smoke shot up the chimney, and the wicked boy, losing all consciousness, fell to the floor insensible.

"Bress those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you," said the old man, as he took off the garments of the wounded boy and laid him upon his bed. Uncle Billy rubbed him and held camphor to his nose until consciousness was restored, and then Jack shrieked with agony as he tried to sit up, for a leg and an arm were broken.

"Jingo! the nigger's got him!" shouted one of the boys, who had been listening at the window. "Won't he give it to him! If I was in the nigger's place I'd break every bone in his body. What shall we do now? Leave him here?"

"Why not?" said another. "It's his own scrape. I'm as cold as an iceberg, and as there don't seem to be much chance for any more fun, I'm going home."

"So am I, — and I," — said others; and so the party broke up, and started, running at full speed, to keep themselves warm, across the fields.

"They've all gone," said Uncle Billy. "I wanted to send for your fader, for yer in a pretty bad fix. I can't leave yer alone for a minute, or I'd go myself."

"O! O!" cried Jack, "it's horrid mean in those fellows to leave me alone here in such a scrape. I always knew they were a mean set."

"De wicked and de crafty am took in der

own net, and when dey call upon der fellows, there be none to help 'em."

"That's true. I never did get into a scrape yet where anybody would stand by me and help me out. Curse 'em!"

"Hi! hi! don't ye go to cursing here. I don't 'low sich in dis yer house."

The old man was an excellent nurse, and did much to relieve Jack's distress through the long night.

The next morning, Johnny Greenleaf went over to see his friend, and carry him a nice hot breakfast. Of course he was greatly surprised and indignant when he heard of the doings of the boys the night before.

"So you are nursing and taking care of the very viper that has stung you, Uncle Billy. How can you do it? He hates you, and all your people, and would be glad enough if he could injure you in any way."

"'Be ye kind, one to anoder, tender-hearted, furgiving one noder, eben as God, fur Christ's sake, has furgiven you.' I don't

bar' him de leastest feeling of unkindness. I couldn't, nohow. I wasn't made dat ar' way."

"O, Uncle Billy, you are a living example to me of goodness. You are a true child of God, if there is one in this world. I want to be so, and I am trying to; but when I see people act like these, I get mad with them and hate them."

"That ar ain't de way. Not hate de por critters, but hate de sin. Try to make de sin as bad in their eyes as it is in yours. Dat ar is de way. Dese yer tings what yer see going on in de world from day to day, de 'wicked flourishing like a green bay tree,' and sich like, dese are de best warnings you ken have, Johnny. 'Pears to me dat one good reason why de Lord lets wickedness run on so, is 'cause it will all de time be a lesson to folks. It makes 'em practice furgiveness, lovin'-kindness, and tender marcy to those wicked folks who want to injure 'em, and it makes 'em seek de others good by tryng all de time to lead

'em into de straight path, and help 'em to throw away the budget of sin they've been pickin' up from yar to yar.

"Yer'll larn a good many more tings, Johnny, afore yer die. Yer'll be 'sprised ter see how some folks do carry on. De Lord lets 'em, sure 'nuf, but at the same time he 'spects you to be a-tryin' to convart 'em, and make 'em see de folly of der ways. It is a great work to be 'gaged in, dis yer convarting de wicked. But first of all be sure dat ye yarself has got into de right path and am following in de way dat de Lord pints out. Bein' lovin', and kind, and helpful to yer fellar-critters, even if dey abuse you, is what we've got to do, Johnny. I prays nightly fur ye, and I 'spects de Lord's gwine to har me."

Jack Tucker heard all this conversation as he lay upon his bed in the corner, suffering intense pain from his broken arm and leg. The words were like seeds dropped by the wayside: falling into stony places or among thorns they would yield nothing,

but if into good ground, they would spring up, and bring forth fruit; "some a hundred fold, some sixty fold, some thirty fold." Time only would tell what the crop might be.

Johnny hurried to inform Mr. Tucker of his son's accident. At that early hour he had not been missed from the house — his parents supposing him asleep in his own room. He was removed to his home, and for many weeks suffered intensely in body, if not in mind, from his "wild oats' adventure," as his mother called it.

CHAPTER VII.

FARMER GREENLEAF FREES HIS MIND.

AT the Greenleafs' farm-house, the firm hand of the mistress was sadly missed. Aunt Mehitabel, a sister of Mr. Greenleaf, was much like her brother, and disposed to let matters slip along in an easy way. The milk would sour, the butter wouldn't come, the vegetables would rot, canker-worms would infest the trees and destroy the fruit crops, hawks would steal the chickens, and the loss and waste from bad management were daily occurrences. Mr. Greenleaf was getting old; indeed, was prematurely old; and his strength was not equal to his years, so he was obliged to hire men to do most of his farm work. This, of course, was expensive, and made the profits of the farm less and less as the years went on.

Johnny had improved much at school, indeed learned all that Master Skillit could teach him. His spare hours he gave to farm labor, though the work was never quite to his taste. He liked better to be in the woods, and study the habits of the animals and birds. In winter, when the farm gave him leisure, he hunted and trapped in the woods, more to make acquaintance with the shy little animals, than for any profit from their furs or meat. Every little footprint in the snow was well known to him. There was the fine, delicate track of the deer-mouse, the deliberate, leisure print of which told him very plainly that she visited and travelled about solely for pleasure. Under the snow this little thing makes long, winding, covered roads, which sometimes come so near the surface that only frail arches of ice cover them, and then one can peep in and see where they lead. This little mouse, with large ears, and fine large eyes, really has no need to travel about in winter in search of food, for her provident habits in

autumn led her to seek out a hollow trunk of a tree, line it well with leaves and grass, and then store away a large allowance of nicely-shelled beechnuts, which will give her plenty to eat through the long winter months.

The partridge prints, as well as many of the habits of this hardy native bird, were well known to Johnny. There upon the snow he saw her course in a straight, well-marked line, like a pretty embroidery stitch, leading from thickly-wooded, impenetrable dell, out across the regular wood paths, and through the brush and undergrowth. Suddenly coming upon her, she would spread her strong wings and mount into the trees, out of harm's way. Johnny watched her, and studied her ways, and felt that every moment was to him a pleasure in which he was so employed.

He knew how the squirrels lived in winter in the trunks of old birches and maples, and in summer up in the tree-tops, in cunning houses made of leafy twigs.

He saw their dainty, nervous, little tracks in the snow, and now and then he would find the burr of a beechnut which one had been digging under the snow to find. Gray and red squirrels out for a frolic over the rocks and logs, on a winter's day, was a sight which Johnny often saw.

The red-fox sometimes ventured to pay a friendly visit to the Greenleaf farm-house of a winter's night, that he might refresh himself with hen-coop dainties. In the morning Johnny would see his clear tracks through the snow, looking like the footprints of a little light-stepping dog. There was another visitor, too, which liked to come by night and search for chickens and eggs. The slender, delicate footprints, about a third larger than those of the gray squirrel, Johnny well knew belonged to that naughty little animal, the skunk. Lazy and indolent, he would not even dig his own hole, but must appropriate that of the woodchuck, or hunt out some natural, nicely accommodating crevice in a rock, and there spend his

idle time until a damp night urged him forth to procure food. Johnny often caught these pretty-faced, fine-toothed little animals in traps which he set for them in his yard. They are strange little fellows, and queer things could be told about them.

Not only were the animals of his native woods familiar to him, but he knew most of the trees and plants, and could find more healthful food in the woods than the country people could imagine. He knew where to find the best water-cresses, mushrooms, berries, roots, pleasant healthful leaves, and trees whose sap was good for drink; and then, with a line and hook, and a few worms, he could bring out from the brooks and streams the largest, plumpest trout and pickerel. Uncle Billy taught him how to use numerous roots and herbs for medicine; and as he always kept up his habit of helping all the little creatures which were wounded or sick, this knowledge was very useful to him.

His old wish to help people to be as sim-

ple, natural, good, and pure as his friends in the forest, grew upon him as he gained in years and strength, and he tried very hard to fit himself for that work.

"Johnny, my boy," said Mr. Greenleaf, one day, as he rested after dinner in his big arm-chair, "Johnny, when I'm gone you'll be left comfortably off. Here's the house and furniture, the barns, horses, cattle, and sheep, and seventy acres of pasturage, woodland, and tillage. It is all yours, my boy. Your poor old father, and your mother that's gone, earned it all by our own hands; and now, my son, we have secured a goodly heritage for you, and may you live long to enjoy it. The good book says something about heaping up riches for those who come after you, and I know we've been toiling with all our strength to do it. If we don't get the benefit of it you will; and I'm sure I don't think such a thing as begrudging you a mite of it.

"You'll be comfortable, but you'll have to work. You can't be spending all your time

like a child, a playing in the woods. Your poor mother used to mourn about you, for she felt that you hadn't the least knack of taking care of yourself. Well, I'm thankful that we have something to leave you, for if we hadn't I expect you'd come to the alms-house sooner or later."

"O, no I shouldn't, father. I'm just as strong and well as any body can be; and even if I didn't have a cent of money to start with, I feel as if I could take care of myself. Why, I could live in a wigwam in the woods, and be just as happy as the birds."

"Live in a wigwam! My gracious, you're as bad as the Injuns! I don't see why you hain't any more ambition. Your mother was a smart woman; and if she had lived to hear you say that, I don't know what she'd a thought you'd be coming to," said aunt Mehitabel, with considerable spirit for her.

"No, no, Johnny," said Mr. Greenleaf. "Abijah Greenleaf's son inherits something better than a wigwam, and was born, I

hope, to do something better than live with wild animals in the woods."

"O, father, the wild animals in the woods live better lives than many people do. I'm sure I'd rather be one of them than to do the harm and sin I see people do. But some day I hope I shall do something better than only living for myself. I want the world to be the better for my having lived in it. I want to help people to live nobler and truer lives."

"Wall, if that don't beat all!" said aunt Mehitabel, as she looked at Johnny's glowing face as he told his father the wish he had so long cherished in his heart. "If that don't beat all! Who'd a thought it? Why, perhaps he'll be a preacher after all, and his old aunt will see him in the pulpit, and hear him preach. I allers heard that preachers and scholars never did seem to take any interest in things that common folks care about, and that's just the way Johnny's been going on. I wonder I never seed it afore."

"I respect the parson's calling, Johnny,"

said Mr. Greenleaf; "but I'd rather see you do anything else under the sun. It's mighty poor business, this trying to convart sinners. It don't pay. Parsons are the poorest creatures a'most that you can scare up. My heart aches for 'em, and if I only could spare a bag of meal, or a quarter of a pound of butter, I'd send it right over to Parson Putman, for they do say that he has a hard scratch to git along. But as I was a sayin', parsons don't airn their salt, and they wear their flesh all off their bones for nothing. If they are too lazy to wear it off, the people do it for 'em. They are the most pecked and abused people on the face of the earth, and I'm sure I don't want any of my kin to come to that."

"O, father!" said Johnny, "don't talk so; I'm sure it must be a noble, blessed thing to try to lead people in the good way. I don't want to make money out of it. I shall always earn enough to live on."

"No, you won't, either, Johnny. You don't know about it as well as I do. If you

can keep your body and soul together it will be as much as you can do. Folks like to get their preachers just as cheap as they can, and then they begrudge 'em what they git, and don't think they airn it. I know just how it is, for I'm one of the committee of our church. I tell it to you now in confidence, and I wouldn't have you lisp it."

"Why, father, it is dreadful! I never could have believed that my own father could make it a business to grind down, and starve one of God's servants,—one of his messengers that he has sent into the world to lead people to goodness. If that is the way it works, I don't see how preaching does you any good!"

"O, yes, my son, we all appreciate the pulpit ministrations, and love to sit under the droppings of the sanctuary. It's a blessed privilege to hear the gospel preached. It falls upon us like the 'oil of gladness,' and the 'dew upon Hermon.' I've been reg'lar to church ever since I was a boy, and I've been deacon these thirty years. O, yes, it

is a blessed privilege to go to church, and hear the Holy Scriptures read, the good long prayers, the good stiff sermons, and all for a'most nothing. To think, too, at what a bargain we git it all! O, we all prize our privileges. But when my own son comes into the question, I don't feel like giving him up to a work which I know so much about. No, my boy, your old father knows best. Your mother wouldn't approve of it at all, I know, if she was alive. She' was a master hand to go to church though, but she knowed as well as I how we managed our parsons. She used to advise us how to manage; she was a true mother in Israel at that. Even the gray-headed old men couldn't beat her at economizing in church matters. She's saved us many a hundred dollars. There wan't a woman in the hull church that was so respected. But if you had a church, Johnny, you would have to live snug if you got such a smart woman in your parish as your mother was. I never saw her match yet. Nobody 'll ever fill her

shoes. I can't hold out much longer, now she's gone. I guess, after all, she putty much made this farm. Nothing seems to go right since she died. Women like her is scarce. No, no, Johnny, she wouldn't approve. She would rise right out of her grave if she thought you'd got to be so shiftless that you'd let 'em starve you. And you couldn't do any better if you was a parson, for if you resent it, and ask for more, that's the end of you: they'd hustle you right off. O, it's mighty poor business. I know all about it."

"O, father, I can't bear to think that people are so bad. Then there is all the more need for me to preach. I can't give it up now. If I had never thought of it before, what you have told me to-day would make me want to do it. O, I can't rest now until I commence the work."

"I can't give my consent, Johnny. I leave you this farm that your mother and I have toiled for, and I expect you'll keep it and carry it on your lifetime, and then leave it to your children. So quit your fool-

ish notions about preaching, and do as your old father wants you to. I can't live long at most; and how do you think your mother would feel to have me tell her, when I meet her in Canaan, what you've gone and done, if you do do it?"

"I don't see," said Johnny, "how people, who do mean and wicked things here on earth, are going to be happy the moment they leave this world, even if they are church members. Folks who cheat, and abuse, and torment their ministers and each other, I don't think are very well fitted to enjoy the society of pure and holy ones in heaven. Perhaps they don't know what wickedness they are doing. I wish I could tell them! Somebody ought. I must do it, father; I can't help it. This dear, beautiful world ought to be full of good, pure, and holy people. I don't see how anybody can look at the sky, the clouds, trees and flowers, and ever feel like doing anything cruel or wicked.

' O, what a world of beauty
A loving heart might plan,
If man but did his duty
And helped his brother man! "

" Do jest hear him talk ! " said aunt Mehitabel, quite delighted. " Why, he talks as good as a parson now ! My sakes ! I never did expect one of my nephews would ever git to be so sharp ! "

" Nonsense, Mehitabel ! " said Mr. Greenleaf, " don't you keep going on in that way. Johnny has got nonsense enough now in his head, without you putting in any more. "

" O, you needn't get so touchy, Abijah. If Johnny don't want to do just as you've planned out for him, why, you must give up to the Lord, and let him lead him. You're a deacon, and you ought to be willing to be disciplined by the Lord. "

" Well, well, Mehitabel, may be he'll outgrow it. It's only a boyish whim. No use to borrow trouble. Let things slip along easy ; I always did, though Polly didn't believe in it. We used to talk a sight about Johnny when she was alive. If she knew

about his notions now as to preaching, she'd say it all come out of my being so easy with him when he was little. She used to tell me that I ought to look after him sharper, and make him work. May be Polly was right after all. She didn't make mistakes about things. She was sharp, Polly was."

Mr. Greenleaf leaned back in his chair, covered his face with a red cotton handkerchief, and, disposed to take things easy, soon fell into a sound sleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GREAT FIRE. — OUT IN THE WORLD.

FIRE! fire! fire!" rang out on the still, cold air, one winter's night. In a short time the village bells in the church steeples and factory towers sent forth, over hill and dale, the wild alarm. Johnny, roused from sleep, ran to the window to look out. Across the fields, off to the southward, in the direction of the village, there was a great light in the sky, and a huge column of black smoke rising slowly into the air.

"A big fire!" thought Johnny. "Guess I must go! Perhaps I can do something to help them." So he hurried on his clothes, buttoned his thick coat close up to his chin, for the night was very cold, and with his shoes in his hand, crept softly down stairs, so

that he might not disturb his father and aunt Mehitabel.

Once out of doors, he plunged into the new, light snow in the field back of his house, and hurried through it as fast as he could. Arrived at the village, he was very much surprised to see the huge paper-mill of Squire Tucker wrapped in a sheet of flames. The factory hands, men and boys, were working with all their might, passing up buckets of water from Muddy Brook stream, and the village people were doing all in their power to extinguish the fire. The long lines of factory tenements were in great danger, and women and girls, in the wildest alarm, were packing furniture and valuables, throwing out of the windows looking-glasses and crockery-ware, and carrying down stairs and out the front doors, feather-beds and comforters, and articles which could as well have been thrown from the windows. Losing all presence of mind, in their fright, these poor people were making a bad matter worse, and wasting much of their substance

which they could easily have saved by coolness and good judgment.

Squire Tucker and Jack were rushing about, giving wild and incoherent orders, which nobody understood, and consequently could not execute.

"I'd like to know how it ketched!" said an old woman, who stood looking on. "My John was the last one there, as far as we know, and there wasn't the leastest sign of a fire then. John was allus keerful about fire ever since his father got burnt to death in Strafford. John has got all the keys of the mill 'cept the private ones the Squire keeps, and it seems mighty strange that anybody from outside could set fire right into the middle of the building. How strange the Squire acts! He ain't doing a speck of good towards saving his mill, or any of the hands' houses, if he is tearin' 'round like mad, and making such a fuss. I shouldn't wonder if folks did suspect, — well, tain't for me to say, but the Squire ain't any better than he ought to be, and I don't 'spose any

of us be for that matter. Them that grinds the poor, as he does, can't have many friends, and would as lief do a'most any crime. Ah, well-a-day! There'll be a sight of poor in Milford after this! My John and his old mother will be among 'em. But the Lord is merciful. He respects the poor and honest, but grinds down the proud and wicked into the dust. Perhaps Tucker's time has come now. The wicked can't always flourish. But what am I saying? I didn't mean to say anything agin any body. May be I'd be put in jail for jest them very words if they should get noised around. The Lord presarve us! It is better to keep our thoughts in our own bosoms. 'Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!'" The old woman hobbled off and disappeared in the crowd. Johnny tried to find something to do, but there were so many already at work, that the abundance of hands, with no one to direct them, only did harm rather than good, so he stood still and looked on.

"Hey, Greenleaf, you there?" exclaimed

Jack Tucker, as he spied Johnny leaning against a tree. "Who do you suppose set this building on fire?"

"I'm sure I don't know. Do you think it was really set on fire?"

"O, yes, no mistake about it. But it's heavily insured; we shan't lose much, after all. Father never spares money on insurance. He says it always pays in the end. It's too bad to have this come just now though, when father is so busy in speculations. He is doing big things in outside matters. Your father was a wise man to mortgage his farm and put the money into that big speculation with father. Good many farmers about here have done so. They'll make a good thing out of it."

"Father mortgaged our farm! O, dear me, how could he do it? I never heard a word of it."

"Nonsense! What are you making such a fuss for? It is the sharpest thing he ever did yet. You'll get all the money yourself

one of these days. The old fellow can't live long."

"Stop, Jack Tucker! Don't you ever say a word like that again. I can't see how father could let Squire Tucker persuade him to go into that speculation. What is it?"

"O, I can't stop to tell you now. I've been here too long already. I must show these people what to do." Saying which, Jack hurried away to increase the noise and confusion.

Johnny had many painful thoughts as he watched the burning building and the excited people. The strong wind which was blowing when the fire first broke out soon went down, and although the factory was entirely destroyed, all the tenement houses were saved.

The next week after the fire many suspicions and rumors were afloat in Milford. The great speculation in which Mr. Tucker was deeply involved, and into which he had drawn so many of the worthy people of his

vicinity, was known to be a failure. Every thing was lost which had been invested in it. Tucker's mill was gone, and the insurance companies so strongly suspected the proprietor of the crime of firing the building, that they refused to pay the sum insured. It could not be recovered without a lawsuit, and the guilty man dared not enter into one, for reasons best known to himself.

He had probably resorted to this scheme that he might instantly be in possession of a large sum of ready money to pay off some mortgages that he had incurred to enable him to invest largely in his grand speculation, — an affair which promised great things, but had suddenly given way, and ruined not only its projector, but many excellent people in Milford. Suspicion being so strong against him, the insurance on the mill was not paid ; and as the needed sum of money could not be raised, the fine residence, with all the other property of Mr. Tucker, was seized, and the bad, designing man and his family left without a penny.

The speculation which impoverished so many was a grand swindle, which Tucker had invented to enrich himself only ; for he well knew that if it succeeded, as he intended it should, he alone would be benefited by it, and reap a rich harvest, while all the others whom he had drawn into it would suffer, and perhaps lose everything. But he didn't care for that. He was a man who looked out for "No. 1," and would do anything, however wicked, to further his own interests, even if he ruined many in doing it. But this time he had gone a step too far, and in injuring others, had ruined himself.

The feeling of the community was so bitter against him, and the threats of many laboring people so loud, that for safety, Tucker and his family were obliged to leave the town secretly, by night, and go out into the world as beggars.

Truly, wickedness will be punished, sooner or later. That rich family of evil-doers, those who wrought mischief and 'ground the faces of the poor,' were brought to

nought, and their name was ever afterwards a by-word and a reproach in Milford.

When the news was brought to Mr. Greenleaf that Tucker's speculation had failed, and that his own farm, and all his property, was swept away, the old man threw up his hands in agony, and sank back, unconscious, into his chair. Body and mind were paralyzed by the shock, and from that moment he never spoke, but lay in stupid idiocy, until removed by death a few months after.

Then the house and farm were sold to pay the mortgage, and aunt Mehitabel went home to "uncle Zekiel's, up at Canterbury," and Johnny was left alone in the wide, wide world, to provide for himself.

It was a sad blow to Johnny. Father, mother, and home, all gone, and he left alone to work his way through the world!

"When yer fader and yer moder forsake ye, den de Lord will take ye up," said Uncle Billy, as Johnny sat in the door-way of the old black house, talking with his

friend, one evening. "De Lord will do better fur ye than anybody ken, I know; but if there is anything in dis yer world that I ken do for ye, why, yer know dat yer have only got to ask me."

"O, Uncle Billy!" said Johnny, "you have helped me all my life. You told me long ago that I must not do as the unwise servant did; because I had but one talent, feel so bad about it that I mustn't exert myself to do anything with it. That story about the 'Heart's-Ease' made a great impression upon me. I determined that if I could not be as great and famous as the servant with ten talents, that I would at least do as well with my one talent as I possibly could. I have tried, Uncle Billy. I have worked at school with all my might, although I found it very hard, and when I left a year ago, Master Skillet said I had done well, and learned all that he had to teach. So I conquered my indolence there; and now, with what learning I have got, I feel that I can go out into the world, and not only

take care of myself, but help other people too. You know, Uncle Billy, that I want to do something for the good of people, but I'm sure I don't know how to go to work, or where to commence."

"Ah, honey, I see now dat my prayers is answered. Ders nuthin' like prayin' and believin'. I 'spected de good Lord to har me, and now he's done it. It's 'bout you dat I prayed so mighty, Johnny, dat you might be, p'raps, a Moses to de people, to lead 'em into de right way. I'll give right up dis yer ole shanty, and follow de Lord with you, even unto de ends of the earth. We can camp in de woods by night, and when yer is hungry I ken feed ye right out of de woods. I'm mighty at cookin', ye know, as well as prayin'. I 'member once, down South, that a preacher came around to us, and he said, 'Now, ye sarvants, keep your kitchens clean, make good light bread, season and cook your meats to the taste of your masters, and perhaps, by and by, you may be admitted to the kitchen of heaven.'

Well, kitchens ain't bad places. I'd rather be a doorkeeper, or a cook, in de house of de Lord, than to dwell in the tents of the wicked. I ain't afeard but de Lord will put me in de best place for me. I ken trust him, and be contented wharever He thinks is best fur me. As I was saying, I ken pack up a few old tings dat I shall want, put 'em into a bundle, sling it over my shoulder, and den leave dis yer old place to some poor critter dat may want it, and den foller right along with you, a preachin' and a prayin' for de salvation of de world."

Johnny smiled at his old friend's enthusiasm, for he felt that he was really in earnest and wanted to do as he said; but of course it was a plan which could not be carried out, and Johnny felt that he must say so, even if it bitterly disappointed Uncle Billy.

After talking the matter over, the old man became reconciled to staying at home, and doing all the good he could in his own vicinity.

"P'raps it will be all for the best," he said. "I ken pray for yer, anyhow, and I reckon I ken do 'bout as well for yer dat way as any other."

So, taking with him the prayers and blessings of the good old colored man, Johnny went forth into the world.

CHAPTER IX.

WRECK ON THE ST. LAWRENCE.—A LEGEND.

FIVE years had passed away. It was a stormy night in September. A brisk easterly wind had gradually freshened into a gale, and the old brigantine, in which our friend Johnny Greenleaf had that day taken passage from a small port on the St. Lawrence River, was exposed to all the fury of the autumnal equinox.

Just before dark the vessel scudded past Perce Rock, the famous retreat for thousands of sea birds, such as gannets, buffins, guillemots, razor-billed ducks, and kittiwakes. Upon seeing the craft, these birds assembled in crowds, and uttered loud and discordant cries, which the superstitious sailors took for a solemn warning, and a

sure presage of the coming storm. These croaking, grave-faced birds are old sea-dogs, and mariners always listen to their cries to determine what the weather will be ; so this night, as their cries were loud and piercing, the men took it for a sign of a violent September gale.

The vessel dashed on, rolling and pitching through the bleak abysses, and mounting high upon the white-capped waves. Sail was shortened ; the mainsail and the foretop-sail were double-reefed, and all was made "tight" for a stormy night. The wind, however, was fair for the port to which they were bound ; and as they were dashing straight along on their course, they almost dared to hope that the shriek of the wind and the cries of the stormy-petrel were but a mockery.

The rain came down in torrents, and the poor sailors on duty were wet to the skin. Still they bravely kept their posts, ready to spring and execute any order which the captain might give. Above the roar of the

storm sounded the commander's voice, ordering a sailor to go out on the bowsprit and clew down some tackle which had got loose. The man flew to his duty; but such was the violence of the wind that he was driven back, to say that he could not do it. Angrily, the captain bade him take the helm which he himself had held so skilfully, and he would go forward and do what the sailor could not.

While the captain was bending over the bowsprit, working bravely to secure the loose ropes, a heavy sea swept over the bows, and a great wave bore away the struggling man. He cried aloud for help, and immediately the packet was hove to, and a boat lowered for his rescue. But such was the fury of the sea that it was instantly swamped and carried adrift, and the commander sank to his long rest beneath the waves.

The men were filled with alarm when their captain went down. The packet had taken a new crew for that trip, and not one

of the men was familiar with the coast, or capable of guiding the vessel through the fog, rain, and darkness to her desired port. Timid and superstitious, seeing a black cormorant fly over the brig, the men took it for the captain's ghost, and, paralyzed with fear, they sank upon their knees, and prayed wildly to their patron saint, La Bonne St. Anne.

One brave sailor, however, kept the helm, and although he knew nothing of the coast, did what he thought was right, and kept the vessel straight on her course. Heavy seas struck the brig, and swept over her decks, and at last there came a terrible crash, and the vessel struck on Red Island reef. The waves rushed over her, and she quickly filled with water, while her crew prayed aloud to St. Anne, and helplessly watched their vessel break up. The sailor who stood at the helm determined to do something to help himself, and rushed forward and secured one of the hatches for a raft. Johnny Greenleaf, who all through the

storm had tried to encourage the men, and rouse them from their frightened stupidity to do what was in their power to save the vessel, helped the sailor launch his raft, and then, lashed together upon it, they committed themselves to the stormy sea.

The brigantine went down, and with her all the crew, save those two, who had floated away upon their frail raft, all through the long, dark, stormy night; these were driven hither and thither, expecting every moment to find a watery grave. The ebbing tide, in spite of the wind ablast, floated them towards the north shore of the St. Lawrence, and the returning flood then drifted them to the opposite side of the river, where, in the morning, they were discovered by some Canadian fishermen. Cold and stiff, the sailor lay bound to the raft, life having been extinct for several hours. Johnny was found alive, though so exhausted and feeble that a great deal of exertion on the part of the kind-hearted fishermen was necessary to restore him to consciousness. Suffering and

emaciated, he lay for several weeks delirious, in a cottage of an old peasant woman, into whose care the fishermen had given the young man.

"So young and weak," said the old woman, as she bent over him one day. "He's nothing but a boy now. I wonder how he came on the raft, and where he is from, and if he has got a father and mother. I shouldn't wonder if he was the only one left from some vessel wrecked in the last gale. Ah, many a poor fellow has lost his life in storms among these islands! I mind me now of many a sad tale that my old grandmother used to tell us children of things that happened on this river before they had lights and buoys here. Ochoon! it's strange things have been seen hereabouts."

"Tell me some of them, good mother," said Johnny, as he opened his eyes and fixed them upon the old woman, who sat, crooning and talking to herself, in a low rocking-chair near the bed.

"Ah, ha! Welladay! My bairn, I'm

glad to see some sense in them blue eyes of yours. I was most afeard that the light of sense wouldn't come there again. Maybe it's a hard time ye've had. But granny won't question ye now. Ye can tell her all about it when it's well and strong ye've got. So ye want to hear some of the tales of this river. Maybe ye never heard of 'Le Brail-lard de la Magdeleine'?"

"No, dame," said Johnny, "for I never was in this region before, though I have been living in Canada for a year or two. Haven't I been very sick?"

"Ah, that ye have, my bairn, and it was with a heavy heart that old Nannette watched ye, for it seemed as if ye could na live out mony days. Peaceable ye were though, and all your wild talk was about good things; and ye kept saying words which brought tears to my old eyes, and made me ashamed for myself to feel how I had been living, and forgetting the things of which you talked so much. Ah, my good bairn! I know ye have found the

'pearl of great price' which we read about in the good Book. O, if I could only find it! But I'll not weary you with my own troubles, though perhaps when you get well ye'll do an old woman a kindness, and tell her how ye found that 'pearl,' and how she can find it. Don't try to think now. Just turn over your head, and let me tell you the story I had in mind."

A happy smile came over the face of the sick young man. He turned his head feebly, and listened, while the old woman told the story of

LE BRAILLARD DE LA MAGDELEINE.

"Years and years ago, so long that nobody knows when it happened, a beautiful, young white woman, with her infant son, were carried away captive by the Indians, who then inhabited these shores. The chiefs were mounted on sure-footed, swift-running, well-trained Canadian horses, and they knew the country so well, and covered their trail so carefully, that the white men

from the little settlement from which the unfortunate woman had been stolen, had little chance of finding them, though they pursued them perseveringly.

"Night and day, through forests, over mountains, and across streams, the Indians kept on their way, and the white men followed as well as they could. The poor woman and her infant, lashed on the back of a horse, must have suffered a great deal as they were cruelly hurried along their wearisome journey.

"At last they came to a halt in a dense part of the forest where game was plenty. Breaking off branches of the trees, they made small wigwams, and prepared to stay a few days in that vicinity. The white woman and her child were confined in one of these little huts, and an Indian was stationed at the entrance to watch them, and prevent their escape. Squirrels, ducks, turkeys, small birds, and rabbits were shot in great abundance, and the Indians were about starting to join their tribe at their own

settlement, when they were suddenly attacked by the white men who had followed them.

"A desperate fight ensued, and the white men were defeated. Most of them managed to escape, and hide in a cave which they had discovered near by. The Indians, however, hunted them out, and, finding their hiding-place, gathered bundles of birch bark, dry leaves, and other combustible materials, which they piled about the mouth of the cave, then applied the torch, and left the sufferers within to be smothered or murdered by them. Some of the men rushed to the mouth of the cave, and were instantly mowed down by poisoned arrows shot from the Indians' hands. Every white man was killed, either by flames or the arrows, and their scalps were taken as trophies, while their bones were left to bleach in the cave.

"Adorned with these scalps, the party went on their way, and at length arrived at the shores of the St. Lawrence River. Here, in a snug cove, they found their canoes,

which they had hidden securely before they commenced their journey across the country. A few of the Indians went on by land with the horses, while the others, with the woman and child, took the canoes, and struck out into the river. They paddled skilfully along the shore, darting around dangerous points, avoiding rocks and whirlpools, and gliding down rapids until night came on, bringing with it intense darkness, a strong wind, and high, white-capped waves. They had reached by that time the most dangerous part of their voyage,—the whirlpool and rapids of Mecumsa, near the dreaded Point Magdeleine.

“The daring Indians strained every nerve to pass this point safely in their light canoes; but the intense darkness, the high winds, and roaring river, together with a strong tide against them, proved too much for them; and, in spite of their exertions, the canoes, which had kept close together, were all drawn into the whirlpool, overturned, and the poor white woman, with all the Indians

except two, who had managed to swim clear of the pool, were whirled around in the gurgling waters, and finally dashed in pieces on the rocks below. Strange to relate, the infant boy was washed ashore on Point Magdeleine. Some say that his guardian angel caught the child by the hand and led it safely to the shore; while others assert that a winged cherub seized the little thing, and bore it through the air out of harm's way. Lying there upon the beach, wet and cold, the dear little child cried aloud for his best friend, — his mother, — and his infant wailings were heard far away upon the waters.

"Ever since that night, at the coming on of a storm, the belated fishermen and voyagers near that spot have heard the cries of the child, blended with the rising wind.

"Not only do these cries foretell storms, but they also promise ill luck to those who hear them; and whatever harm comes to the parties in the months which follow, it is

supposed it was caused by unfortunately hearing the cries from Point Magdeleine.

“Wiser people, those who do not believe in silly superstitions, say the noise which is so plainly heard in stormy weather is caused either by the surf rolling into hollow caverns along the Gaspé coast, or by the shelving rocks, over which the waves moan with a sound as mournful as a funeral dirge. Whatever may be the cause of the sound, this is the end of the legend of *Le Brillard de la Magdeleine*.”

Old Nannette finished her story, which she had related in her mixed Scotch, English, and Canadian dialect, and added, that she had told it as 'twas told to her by her aged grandmother, who had heard it many times from old people, who themselves had heard it related by those still older. For generations it had been handed down, with many others, about phantoms being seen in storms upon some of the most dangerous rocks in the river; about shipwrecks,

murders, hermits, and strange sights and sounds which had been seen and heard upon the waters, islands, and shores of the St. Lawrence.

Johnny thanked the old woman when she had finished, and it made her pleased to think he had been interested in her story.

"It's mony anither, belike, I can tell ye, my bairn," said she, "if it is by the telling of them that I can keep ye in bed and amused; for the doctor says ye must not think of going about your business, whatever that may be, for mony a week yet."

"O, good mother! I do hope I can get about soon, for I begin to feel almost like myself again."

"Ah, well, bairn, we shall see. Ye will gain now every day, and ye know it's 'mony a little makes a mickle;' so be patient, and granny will get ye up soon."

CHAPTER X.

OLD NANNETTES' CONGREGATION. —JOHNNY'S TALENT IMPROVED.

ONE pleasant Sunday morning in October, Johnny Greenleaf sat in a comfortable rocking-chair in the cottage of the old Scotch-woman, looking out of a window, from which he could see the blue St. Lawrence, with its restless waters and many white-sailed vessels. He was weak and pale, and still too feeble to leave his snug quarters and the good woman's care, and pursue his journey.

"Ah, I see that ye are thinking of them that's far away," said Nannette, as she finished her morning's house-work and sat down to rest. "It's wistful your eyes are, and it's far off that they are seeing. Per-

haps it is your ain good mither and father that ye are thinking of."

"True enough, dame, I was thinking of matters far away, but father and mother I have not in this world. There is but one near my old home who now waits and prays for me, and perhaps by this time he too has gone, for his eyes were dim and his hair white with age, even when I saw him last, several years ago. It is an old colored man, who was the best friend of my childhood, and who helped and encouraged me in all that was good and pure."

"Ah, indeed! Then the Lord bless him for teaching ye the blessed words I've been listening to from your lips ever since you have been sick. Ah, it's mony and mony a day since I heard the like. I was a wee bit of a child the last time I went to the kirk in the auld country. The good man laid his hand on my head and blessed me that day, for he knew we were just leaving for this country, and a bit of a psalm he said too, over me, and that is the last blessing or

psalm I've ever got since. Mickle good the like of them would have done me in the sore times I've had here. Husband, bairns, mither, and all taken from me, and poverty pinching me hard. Alack, if I could read myself, or any of my neighbors could read for me, or there was a kirk to go to, or any way that I could hear some of them holy words from the good Book, happy indeed I'd be."

"O, I am glad, good Nannette," said Johnny, "that you are longing and waiting to hear such things. To find just such hungry needy ones is the business of my life. I have labored for that these last three years, and at the time I was wrecked, I was going to a small place up the river not far from here, where I could carry the bread of life to people who had long been without it. This, then, is the place where I am most needed, and our raft was driven upon this shore, that I might tell you that which you are longing to hear. Travelling about from place to place, as the Lord directs my steps, I have been permitted to speak his word to many a

little group of needy ones. Often it would be a poor, sad woman, away off in the woods, or on some lonely road far from any house, to whom I would be sent. Sometimes it would be to the charcoal burners, living in little huts in the dense forests. Sometimes to the French fagot gatherers; and often to the rough fishermen on the river shores. Many of these had lived thoughtlessly, thinking only of their earthly interests, while some of them had really led lives of crime. But when I talked with them, and explained the character of our great loving Father, and told them his readiness to forgive sin, and his desire that all should accept him as the guardian and comforter of their lives, and then when I told of the happiness of those who know God's love, and feel his presence with them every day, they were ready to cry out, 'I want to know him too.'"

"O, bairn!" said Nannette, "for bairn I must call ye,—for if my own bairns were living they would be much older than ye; ah,

I am just like those who said, 'I want to know him, too.' Now up the road apiece, there, in that little thatched cottage which you see behind the hedge, there be those who want to hear as much as I do myself; and then a mile farther on, at Jacques Mallieu's, I know some of them would listen; and half a mile or so down the other way live Donald Kennedy's kin, Nancy Cameron's family, and Biddy O'Rooke; all of 'em must have a chance with myself. If ye feel able to talk to us, I'm the one that'll put on my big old flat and gang for them. This very afternoon then I'm sure they'll be here, for it's on a Sunday that we all have a holiday.

"We're all of us neighbors and good friends, though we came from different parts. There's Biddy, she's from auld Ireland, and a generous-hearted soul she is, too, and a good Catholic, they tell me, though not the least sign of a priest has she seen this mony a day; so your words will be very welcome to her, for it's about the

same God ye preach, be ye Catholic, Protestant, or whatever kind of a name ye've got; for I've heard that there be mony names to ye besides Christian. All we long for here is, to know about the great Lord, and how we can live near to him."

"Then there's Donald; he and his came from the best country of them all, bonny auld Scotland. Nancy is from there too; but as for Jacques Mallieu, he is from France, though he is a braw good man for a' that.

"But as I was a saying, I'll gang for 'em all; and right thankful we'll be to ye if ye'll just give us a bit of a psalm, and say a prayer over us."

"Go quick, then, Nannette," said Johnny, "and bring them here, and we will have a happy, little Sunday service together."

"Bless ye for that. Are ye sure that ye feel strength enough for it?"

"O, yes, indeed! I've always strength for that work."

"Weel, then, I'll be going, and in the mean

time ye must rest and sleep. Old Nannette knows the wants of your body, and ye know the wants of her soul. Ah, weel, it takes all kinds to make a world, but if we could all know a little of everything, belike we'd get on the better. But some ken do one thing and some anither; and then again, some ken do mony things, and there be others that can do but one. It's just as we are made, I s'pose. I can nurse sick people, and I mean to do it well, for it's about all I can do; so now I'm going to see you safe at rest before I start off."

The kind-hearted, talkative old woman shook up the pillows, and prepared the bed for the invalid; and when he was quietly resting, she pulled her old hat from its nail, and set out to gather up her congregation.

"Good day to ye, Biddy," said Nannette, as she entered the little house of her friend. "Would ye like to go to the kirk to-day?"

"To a kirk, indade, as ye call it! Shure, thin, an' I see the like of none at all, an' niver again do I expect to see one, for these

auld bones won't lave this spot agin 'till it's in a coffin they carry thim. The sight of a praste would make me heart lape for joy."

"Weel, then, an' leap it will, for up yonder at my cottage is one just come from the Lord, to say a good word to the like of us. I'm here to ask ye to come to my house this afternoon and hear the good man talk."

"Indade, thin, I will, an' thank you kindly, too, for the chance. I'll be there, Nannette, never fear, as soon as I ate my own dinner, an' give his own to the pig and the hins."

"I knew ye'd come, and it's welcome ye'll be. But I must gang on and git more."

So the little old figure, in blue stockings, stout shoes, short coarse dress, and broad straw hat, trotted off to Donald Kennedy's, on her mission of love.

"Welladay, Donald," said she, to a stout, broad-shouldered young man in a scotch-cap, and bushy side whiskers, who was leaning over the picket gate, which enclosed a trim garden in front of a neat cottage.

"Welladay, good mither," he replied,

doffing his cap in respect to old age. "Walk in, walk in, and see the folks."

"Weel, mony thanks, but my stay must be short, for I've come to ask ye all to my house to-day to hear the word of the Lord, from one who can give it to us, — the young man who was found on the shore lashed to the raft, ye remember. The Lord sent him where he was much needed; so ye'll come to hear him, I know."

"Ye are right there, mither. We'll be glad of the chance. I can speak for us all. So you needn't wait if ye're in haste. I ain't what I should be, but I'd like to be, and may be I'll get nearer to it if I come. You may expect me, and I thank you for coming after us."

"O, ye needn't, for it's only doing my duty by ye. I could'na take joy in it alone by myself. I always be happy like to share the good I have with my friends and neighbors. Adieu, then. And, Donald," she called back, as she hurried away, "bring your old grandmother with you if ye can

get her along. She can lean on your arm; and if ye start in time, I bethink she'll get there."

"Ay, ay," answered Donald. "I'll fetch her."

When Nannette had finished her round of calls, she made her way home to announce her success, and prepare her kitchen for so many guests.

Johnny, refreshed and rested by his nap, sat up again near his favorite window, turning over the leaves of his Pocket Bible, to find the words most suited to the wants of his hearers.

Morning and noon passed away, and at last the neighbors began to assemble. They were all neatly attired, and came in with eager faces, and seated themselves quietly about the room. Johnny being too weak to stand, sat still in the old rocking-chair, and talked pleasantly with the people as they came in. When they were all there, Johnny opened his Bible, and read, in a plain, comprehensive way, the words, —

“ ‘Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

“ ‘Ask and it shall be given you ; seek and ye shall find ; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth ; and he that seeketh, findeth ; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.’

“ The Lord Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, is a tender, loving Father to every one of you. He is not afar off, as you sometimes think, but he is always near, and knows the wants of every one. All that we enjoy, every good and perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of love. He watches over and cares for all his creatures ; even a little sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice.

“ This great Being, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, will hear the cry of the humblest child of earth. He wants us to come to him as children do to their earthly parents, not only bringing all our sorrows,

but our joys also. Are there not some here who have borne the burden in the heat of the day, and are wearied by the cares of many long years? For you there is a message: 'Come unto me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Your burdens can be lightened, and you may find rest and strength in God's love.

"This love is free for all. Ask that you may receive it into your hearts, that you may feel its power, and that God's presence may be a reality to you, and then you will be filled with his righteousness, for every one that asketh receiveth."

"Ay, indade thin, an' it's only to ask that we've got to," said Biddy, when there came a pause. "Shure, thin, an' that's aisy enough. Manny's the time that I've said over me prayers, and nothing has come of it. I feel myself that there is somebody above yonder there, who is greater than all the rest of us put together. Shure, I've always been to church, and confessed all my life,

when I had a chance ; but it wasn't much of the great Father himself, that I heard, though He is the one I want most to know ; and shure there didn't seem to be any way to him before. I bless ye, good misther, for telling me that."

"Ah, Biddy, them's the very thoughts of me own breast," said dame Kennedy. "It's well ye said it for me. Blessings on ye, young maun, for saying this to the like of us."

The old people, Donald, and the little children, all listened attentively to the good news which Johnny proclaimed to them.

"Dinna ye forget that, Jamie," said Nannette, to a bright boy of twelve years old. "'Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth,' and then ye won't live, and find your way about in the dark, as I have for these mony years. Learn to love the dear Lord when ye're young, and choose him for your Friend all through your life. It will make you live a happy life ; and if troubles should come to you, then you can

get strength to bear them, and you'll have an arm to support you, and a love that will never fail you. I wish I had minded that long ago. I have felt the need of it all, but somehow I let myself go on without it, until it seemed as if I had got to learn to know the Lord all over again. I could'na believe he was just here about me, waiting for me to speak and love him. I might have gone on so to the end of my days if this blessed servant of God had'na said the words which brought it all to me, and made my heart and soul cry out, to find once more the living God, the great and loving Father. Now ye heed what he says to you, Jamie, and don't live on to old age alone, as poor Nannette has."

The afternoon passed swiftly away while Johnny read, talked, and prayed with Nannette and her neighbors; and when, at last, they went away to their homes, each one felt in his heart a desire to live nearer to

the great and loving Father, of whom they had heard that day.

Johnny's heart was filled with gratitude, and prayers of thanksgiving went out to the dear Lord who had helped him improve his one talent, and made him his messenger and instrument in bringing wandering sheep and lambs into the fold.

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUSION.

“ They are mustering, they are marching !
How their onward tramping rolls !
They are coming, coming, coming !
A hundred thousand souls.

“ From the granite hills, the seaside,
In solid ranks like walls ;
A hundred men to take the place
Of every man that falls.

“ Right across the midnight, —
Right onward, stern and proud :
Their red flags shining as they come,
Like morning on a cloud.

“ Battalion on battalion,
The West its bravery pours ;
For the colors God's own hand has set,
In the bushes at their doors !

“ In the woods, and in the clearings,
The lovers, brothers, sons,
The young men, and the old men
Are shouldering their guns.

“They have heard the bugle blowing,
Heard the thunder of the drum;
And, farther than the eye can see,
They come, and come, and come!”

Alice Carey.

WHEN the bugle sounded over the land, at the breaking out of the rebellion, Johnny Greenleaf, with hundreds of other noble men, hastened into the battle-field, to save their country from disunion and disgrace. Johnny's healthy life in the open air, and his adventures in the forests of New England and Canada, admirably fitted him for the hard duties and exposure of a soldier's life. So he shouldered his musket, pocketed his Bible, and went forth to serve wherever he was needed, on the field, in camp, on the march, or in hospital. He was soon promoted to a chaplain; for, although he was useful and brave in the thickest of the battle, there was no one who could comfort the dying, and pray with the sick and wounded, as he could.

Physicians, surgeons, and nurses welcomed him to the bedsides of their patients,

for his kind words always soothed and calmed them, and left them happy and peaceful.

"You are always welcome here, sir," said an old surgeon to Chaplain Greenleaf one day. "I'm not afraid to trust my patients to you, for your religion is the noblest thing I ever knew. It acts like a charm upon these sick boys; calms their minds, cheers their hearts, and, in many cases, prolongs their days, and even restores them to health, by keeping up their spirits, and making them light-hearted and joyous. I have known chaplains who would worry men into their graves faster than the worst disease, and I always felt it my duty to keep such men away from my patients. But the simple words which you speak to them; right from the Bible, and the tender messages from the loving Father which you find for them, make them so happy and so grateful to him for his great love for such poor fellows as they are,—for many of them have led hard lives,—make them so grateful, I

say, that I've seen tears of joy stream down their cheeks when they come to the knowledge of the Friend they have above. 'If there's joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth,' said a wounded soldier to me one day, 'there's joy there to-day over me, for Chaplain Greenleaf has been round here talking with me, and I declare, I didn't know that the Lord would think me worth noticing before. It is strange, but I never felt that there was the least kind of a chance for me before. I'm *sure* there is one now. I feel a hundred per cent. better. This thing is enough to lift a man up, if he didn't have a cent in his pocket, a friend in the world, or a limb on his body.'

"Chaplain," continued the surgeon, "yours is a noble profession, and you must be a happy man to know that you are doing so much good. Surely the world is the better for having you in it."

"Ah," thought the chaplain, "long ago I told father and aunt Mehitabel that I wanted to live so that the world might be

the better for me. I have tried, and now I am permitted to see some encouraging proofs that my efforts have not been in vain. Little by little, and grain by grain, I have tried to do good as I found opportunity. Never have I been able to do any great deed, — I hadn't the ability for it; but what talent I had, — my one talent, — I have tried to improve, and with God's help, I believe I have done it, and by so doing, helped my fellows, and led them nearer to God."

* * * * *

One morning, when the young chaplain was going his rounds among the sick and wounded in a government hospital, his attention was called to a narrow cot, upon which was a fine-looking young man, wild with delirium, waving his arm above his head, and shouting, in a loud, hoarse voice, the favorite army song, —

“Sing Hallelujah, sing Hallelujah,
Glory be to God on high,
For the old flag, with the white flag,
Is floating in the azure sky!”

"He's been singing that way all night, sir, and keeping the others in the ward awake," said a sick soldier in an adjoining cot. "Poor fellow! he can't stand it long. The doctor took off both legs yesterday, and he's been crazy ever since, and they say he can't live the day out. He's a good fellow, and a brave soldier. He stood next to me, and I caught him when he fell. He never flinched under fire; he was determined to do all in his power to make the old flag gain the day, and his bravery inspired all the rest of us. Poor fellow! I wish he could speak to us before he dies."

The chaplain sat down by the bedside, and took one hand of the sick man in his own. As he gazed into the flushed and excited face, the features seemed familiar, and in a few seconds it flashed upon him that this was his old friend and schoolmate, Sam Jenkins. The wounded soldier was unconscious of his friend's presence, and being exhausted by his feverish ravings and suffering body, he fell into a heavy sleep.

A short time after, as the chaplain passed near that cot again, the sick man awoke and called for some water. Sitting by his side, his friend gave him the cool, refreshing draught, then bathed his hot face and hands, and brushed back the damp hair from his forehead. The delirium had passed away, and the man was in his right mind, though suffering severely in body. As the soldier looked into the benignant face and tearful eyes of the chaplain, he also recognized a friend, though it had been many years since they met.

"Can this be Johnny Greenleaf?" asked the dying soldier, trying to raise himself on his elbow that he might see him more easily.

"Yes, Johnny Greenleaf it is," said the chaplain, "and you are my old schoolmate, Sam Jenkins. My good fellow, you have been badly wounded, I find."

"Yes, so badly that I cannot recover. My end is near, and I'm not afraid. I feel that 'I'm going home, to die no more.' You

were the one who first led me to love the dear Father. My hope and trust in God have never once failed me since I first came to know what it was."

"But I don't understand," said the chaplain. "I have not seen you for many a year; and when we last met we were only boys. I know I never said a word to anybody upon that subject then, unless it was to Uncle Billy Grimes."

"True, you never said a word, but sometimes actions speak louder than words. Do you remember the time that Jack Tucker, and some of us boys, met you in the woods on your way home from school one day, and Tucker tried to give you a pounding? That was the time that my first impression of practical goodness came to me. Your spirit of kindness and forgiveness of injuries took hold of me, I tell you. It was a whole sermon in itself. I got the boys off, and perhaps saved you a good beating; but you had done more than that for me, by the noble example you set me. That was the

beginning: there was much after that. But I must rest a few minutes; my strength is going."

The chaplain bathed his head again, and watched him with tearful eyes. "How little do we realize that every word and deed of ours has an influence for good or for bad," he said. "I did not know that anything I said or did in the woods that day, during the encounter with Jack Tucker, would affect a person's life from that time onward. It will be a great lesson to me, and I shall try always to be on my guard in future, and live, speak, and think, if possible, so that my influence may always be for good."

"It used to be for good, Johnny, even when you were a little fellow. Perhaps it was an unconscious influence. Being so much with Billy Grimes was a good thing for you, Johnny. I do believe that good old soul never did a bad thing in his life. His influence was always for good. I wish mine had been so. Do you remember the night that we boys made that raid upon

Uncle Billy's old house? O, how ashamed I am when I think of that! I was led away by Jack Tucker. His influence was always bad. I never could resist it. That has been my trouble through life; I couldn't stand up for what I knew to be right. I dreaded the laugh of people too much. Your influence over me was good, and I always could do right when you were anywhere about; but then Jack Tucker's was always bad, and I came under, and yielded to that too. I have found many like Jack in the world, since I've launched out into it. I have known the right, and have been more deeply impressed by it since I saw what you did in the woods that day to Jack Tucker and us boys. Still I've not always had the moral courage to act up to it. I believe in God, and love him, and, as I said before, I've never once lost my hope and trust in him since I first came to know what it was. I've prayed for more courage to do my duty, but still I've often fallen short of the mark. I know the dear Father is merciful and all-forgiving,

and I do not fear to meet him, and beg his forgiveness. I cannot talk — my breath is failing. Read to me something suited to my case."

The chaplain opened his little Pocket Bible, and, turning to John xiv., read,—

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Then, turning the leaves slowly, he came to Revelations vii., from which he read these comforting words:—

"After this I beheld, and lo! a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which

sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might be unto our God, forever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead

them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

"Amen!" said the dying man. "Thank God." There was a long pause, and then the sick soldier slumbered peacefully. Once more awaking, he talked quietly with his friend about his mother and those at home, and sent loving messages to them all. He thanked the chaplain for what he had done for him; for the good influence he had exerted over him in early days, — an influence which had made him so keenly alive to the right, that he had been willing to lay down his life in a noble cause. Again exhausted with talking, he asked his friend to pray with him, after which he fell into that quiet, peaceful sleep, from which "none ever wake to weep." * * *

At the battle of Gettysburg, where so many brave men fell, our hero worked with untiring zeal among the wounded and dying. Stooping to place his canteen to the lips of a rebel soldier, who called wildly for



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water, as he lay mortally wounded upon the ground, the chaplain saw at once that the rebel, in his gray suit, was none other than Jack Tucker, — the bad, unprincipled boy of his native village, away up among the hills.

"Jack, do you know me?" he asked, as he knelt upon the earth and supported his head, while he drank, with feverish, dying eagerness, the wished-for water.

"No ; who are you?" groaned the sinking man.

"Have you forgotten your old school-fellow, Johnny Greenleaf, of Milford Village?"

"Johnny Greenleaf ! Can it be possible? *You* kneeling by me, and giving me that water that I wanted so much, when my father and I ruined your family, and left you without even a covering for your head ! O, it is too much ! Can you, can you forgive me?"

"O, willingly, truly ! I never had anything against you. I have often thought

of you, and wondered what had become of you. I am sorry to see you here, engaged with those who are trying to ruin our beloved land. How could you do it?"

"Yes, how could I do it, and all the other bad things I've been doing all my life! I have gone my own way; I have sought my own pleasure; I have gratified myself at the expense of every one else. I have done mischief and sin of every kind, and now I'm here dying. What is in store for me? You're a chaplain of the Union army: I've heard of you. You, surely, can tell me about the hereafter. What is there for such as I? Will the Lord, — for I feel that there *is* a God, — say to me, 'Depart from me forever'?"

"The Lord is merciful and gracious; slow to anger and plenteous in mercy," said the chaplain. "He will not that any one should perish, but that all should come into everlasting life.' God has watched over and protected you all through your life, and has been very merciful to you, notwith-

standing your disregard of him and his laws, and now are you not willing to trust him further? Whatever God sees fit for you in the future will be but just and merciful, we know from the character of our dear Lord. Fear not, but trust him."

"Yes, yes, I know. But it is an awful thing to lie down to die, and have nothing to look back upon but a misspent life. Days, weeks, months, and years,—all, all lost! O, for a few years in which I might live better! Lost, lost, lost, all the days of my life! O, if I had only followed your example, instead of despising it, as I did, when a boy! If I had heeded some of the words which old Billy Grimes used to say to me, I should have been a different man. You followed the straight and narrow road, while I took the broad and easy one which led to sin. God forgive me, for I mourn and lament it now. O, for more time, more time! Forgive me, O Lord, forgive me!" The head fell back, and the young man was dead. With words of penitence on his lips, he passed

into the presence of the all-forgiving Father, and the veil of hereafter closed upon him.

* * * *

“The wasp feeds in the hollow peach;
The thistle-down is blowing, blowing;
The fern is dead; and the morning red
In the eastern cloud is glowing.
The holly oak-staff is broken in two,
And the weed-fires are all flaring;
Time is shaking the sluggish sands,
And the year, the year is wearing.”

It was a sunny morning in October. The woods had exchanged their golden, crimson, and scarlet tints for more sober hues. The oaks, though some of them were still green, were mostly arrayed in russet-brown. Here and there, where the sunlight fell upon a clump of berry-bushes or a bit of distant woodland, it brightened up with many hues, which contrasted finely with the general sombreness around. Dry leaves rustled under the trees, and walnuts, in their green coverings, and chestnuts, in their prickly burrs, lay thickly upon the ground.

Through an orchard, with its grass all brown and sere, except under the shadow

of some wide-spreading apple tree, where it still retained its dark, cool green, strolled a young man, in whose browned face and honest, kindly eyes, we see our old friend Johnny Greenleaf, late chaplain in the Union army.

The war was over, and the chaplain no longer needed upon the ground where he had done so much good; so, finding his duties done in that direction, he had turned his steps homeward, and was now nearing the cottage of old Billy Grimes.

Leaping over a mossy stone wall, which had been built perhaps a hundred years before, the young man came in sight of the ancient hut of his old friend.

Many years had passed since he had heard from Uncle Billy, and now perhaps the cottage was empty, or inhabited by a stranger. These thoughts, however, were quickly driven away by the sight of the old man himself, who tottered out of the door, and hung up some herbs to dry on the side of the house.

Stepping up to him, Johnny stood still to see if the old man would know him. Uncle Billy turned and looked at the tall stranger, adjusted his spectacles that he might see him better, then threw up his arms, and exclaimed, "Bress de Lord, O my soul, my prayer has been heard! now let thy servant depart in peace." Then seizing Johnny by the hand, the old man wept for joy.

They sat down together upon the old flagstone before the door, and Johnny gave an account of his life since starting out with the old man's blessing, so long ago.

Very modestly he told his story, but still when he closed, Uncle Billy exclaimed,

"'Well done, good and faithful servant, ye have been faithful over a few things and now ye shall have much.' The one talent, which once yer wanted to go and bury in the earth, because yer didn't have but one, ye thought, ye have improved and cultivated. Yer have done yer duty, as the Lord of the vineyard wanted yer should, and now my prayer is answered, and I can depart in

peace. Go on, and tell this story of your life to them that will hear, and then I reckon many a poor little fellow, who thinks he ain't got nothing but one talent, will be 'couraged and convinced, and be led to go and do likewise; that is, as the story said, if he finds he is a little bit of a 'heart's-ease' instead of a great oak, he will try to make the best of himself, and be de best kind of a 'heart's-ease' in de world, and not spend all his precious time a-regretting and complaining that he ain't de oak tree. It pleased de good Lord to make us all jest as he did, and he meant for us to make de most of ourselves, too; and you's been an' done it, Johnny, and de Lord will bress yer forever."







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